


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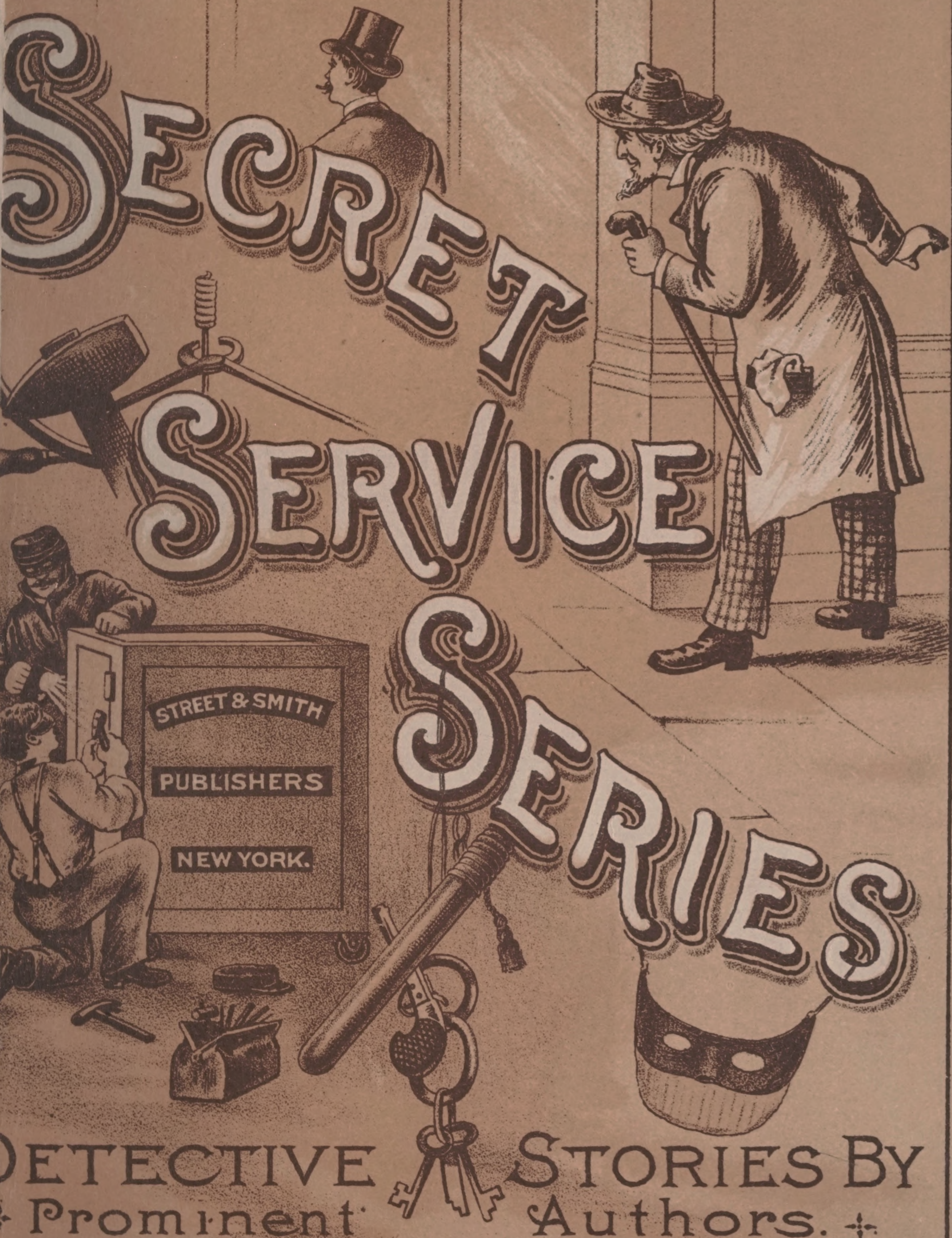
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

DETECTIVE BOB BRIDGER.

By R. M. TAYLOR.

No. 34.



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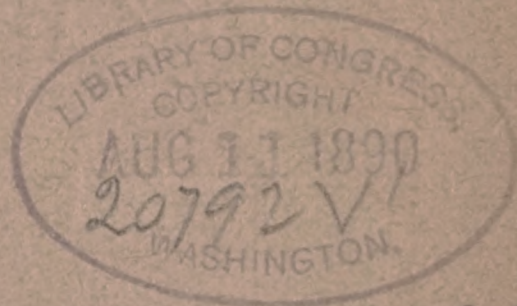
DETECTIVE BOB BRIDGER;

OR,

THE MAN FROM SCOTLAND YARD.

BY

R. M. TAYLOR.



NEW YORK:

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DETECTIVE BOB BRIDGER.

CHAPTER I.

THE NIGHT EXPRESS MYSTERY.

"See-ree-go! 'e, 'e, 'e! See-ree-go!"

It was the wild, meaningless cry of an idiot under the lash for the crime of garroting.

As imitated by Detective Bob Bridger, it sounded to me like the screaming note of a sea bird which I had once heard while hanging on, and bereft of all hope, in the rigging of a wrecked ship.

The bird's discordant cry seemed then to be the exultation of a demon.

It now lingers in my memory as if it had been the message of an angel.

For barely had it sounded when the fierce hurricane subsided, the toppling waves became long and rounded, and our wrecked ship rode safely until succor approached.

I had asked Detective Bridger to tell me the tale of the Scotch Detective, and I begin my version of the story, as he began his, with the cry of the silly garroter, as above.

Detective Bob Bridger has been for years one of the most active and successful secret service officers in the employ of the United States Government.

He has amassed a comfortable fortune, married a Philadelphia girl, and now takes things easy.

On his shirt-front he sports, at times, a solitaire gem of great value,

The fellow was a wild eyed greenhorn, and Dan hustled him out on the platform.

A few moments later, like the persistent darky in the negro minstrel sketch, the same man entered again.

Again Dan hustled him out, and again he returned.

His third entrance so exasperated Dan that, seizing up a poker from the coal-box, he rushed upon the intruder as if to strike him down.

The unfortunate immigrant, crazed with terror, hastened forth to the platform and sprang from the train.

The train was rushing at the time through a rocky cut at a fifty-mile-an-hour gait.

The ill-fated passenger struck the left bank of the cut, and bounding back under the iron wheels was cut to pieces.

Barely had Dan ended telling of the sad affair when the engineer blew for Maysville station.

Here dwelt a gang of roughs who delighted in beating the conductor out of a ride when they could.

The train having stopped, discharged, and received its passengers, started ahead again at Bridger's signal.

He, as usual, entered the first coach, and throwing the glare of his lamp in the passengers' faces, proceeded through in quest of tickets.

He was thinking intently the while of Dan Colgate's tale regarding the German immigrant who on the night previous leaped from the train and killed himself.

Near the middle of the coach a tall man lay spread out upon two seats, and sound asleep.

He was a boss raftsman, and was returning from a trip down the Alleghany River to Pittsburg, on a lumber raft.

The man wore a soft black hat, and had so placed it as to completely cover his face.

One of the tricks of the Maysville roughs was to thus hide their faces, so that the conductor might think them sleeping through passengers and pass them by.

On lifting the man's hat that he might see his features Bridger touched his hand.

Perceiving who the passenger was he passed on, leaving the man still sleeping.

When he had passed half way through the second coach he had occasion to turn about, and thought he perceived some one rushing from side to side, in the darkness, upon the platform.

As the train was nearing Pittsville station he supposed

that it was the brakeman—for, in those days, steam brakes were not in general use.

He continued on to the end of the coach, when the news-boy, with pallid features, came running into the car from the front, and toward him.

With trembling hands he clutched Bridger's arm, and whispered in his ear that the tall man had sprung from the train.

A moment later the raftsmen's companions came through from the front car excitedly looking for their missing friend, and it became evident that what the boy had said was true.

When the train pulled up at Pittsville station Bridger bade the section men hasten back along the track on their hand-car.

A mile from the station they found the unfortunate passenger.

He lay in a crushed and bleeding mass where he had fallen, and only lived an hour.

He was conscious, however, and said that he had been asleep, and dreaming, when he became suddenly possessed of the delusion that he was on a swift running raft, and must manage to jump from it to the river's bank, and make a landing.

The raft seemed borne along so rapidly that for a moment he hesitated, when, glancing behind him, he thought he perceived an angry man rushing upon him with an up-lifted iron poker.

In terror he ran from his seat to the platform and sprang toward the delusive bank, awaking to hear the train thunder by, and to find himself, stunned and bleeding, at the edge of the track.

On learning these facts, Bridger believed that Dan Colgate's story of the German's fate, at the time so vividly pictured on his brain, had been in some mysterious way conveyed, by his touch, to the raftsmen's brain, so as to shape the man's dream and cause his death.

One week afterward on Bridger's train, at the same spot and hour, a second passenger met his death under circumstances exactly similar.

The people along the line became alarmed.

They did not understand that every human being's brain is an electric battery, and the body's nerves its communicating wires.

They, therefore, would not believe that a man of Bob Bridger's powerful frame and magnetic stature might in-

nocently, by a mere touch of the hand, telegraph the ruling impression of his brain to that of a slumbering man, so as to make that impression the law of the sleeper's action.

They intimated instead that Bridger and his brakemen were engaged in robbing passengers and then hurling their victims to certain death from the dark platforms of the swift running train.

A newspaper correspondent, whose name was something like Black, approached Lew Hutchinson, Bridger's mail-train engineer, on the day subsequently to the second passenger's death.

Assuming a tragic air, he said :

"Do you think, sir, that Conductor Bridger would do a deed of blood?"

The engineer, oil-can and torch in hand, was oiling around, and supposing the man to be a "crank" suffering from the delirium, responded :

"I have no liquor on the engine, cap, but there's a can of first-class kerosene there—if that will do you any good."

The indignant scribe forthwith hastened to his home, and penned an article to his paper in which he charged that the railroad men of the line were surely banded together to do deeds of robbery and murder.

Meanwhile, puzzled at the strange deaths of the two sleeping passengers, and fearful of further repetitions of the mystery, Bob Bridger resolved to resign his position.

When he had made the extra trip according to the superintendent's order he again entered that officer's presence.

To his surprise he found both the superintendent and the general manager impatiently awaiting his coming.

"Conductor Bridger," said the general manager, "in regard to your resignation as conductor, I do not wish you to quit the company's employ, and, if agreeable, will assign you service in another branch."

"In what capacity, sir?"

"I wish you to go to Europe as the company's special detective."

"To accomplish what?"

"The recovery of a large amount of money recently embezzled from the treasurer's safe by a young man whom you have doubtless often seen."

"Who, sir?"

"Richard Hanford, the treasurer's chief clerk."

"Possible?"

"You know him, then?"

"Very well, by sight, from having seen him frequently upon my train."

"I thought you would."

"And you are assured that he has embezzled the funds, and sailed for Europe?"

"It is all too true. Three weeks since he asked and obtained one week's leave of absence. When a fortnight had transpired and he not returned, the treasurer began to fear that all was not right. On examination funds to the amount of sixty thousand dollars were found missing. And we have since learned that a young man answering Hanford's description procured a ticket for London, and, two weeks past, sailed from New York on a Cunard steamer."

Then why have you not notified the London police, and had him arrested?"

"It is a delicate matter. Richard Hanford is the only son of a widow, and she the only sister of a prominent officer of the road. And what I want you to do is to trace the young man, and arrange with the detective officers in whatever city you run him down to apprehend him in a secret, make believe manner. When you have thus recovered the company's funds in his possession you will pay the officers liberally for their services, release Hanford from custody, and persuade him to return in penitence to his heart broken mother to be forgiven. You see it is our aim to keep the matter quiet. It would be the death of Hanford's mother, and a heavy blow upon the officer on whose recommendation he was appointed if the thing gained publicity. This gentleman has placed an amount sufficient to cover the steal in the treasurer's keeping, and we have agreed to keep the matter quiet. The rest I leave in your hands, Bridger, believing that you are shrewd enough to work it."

And thus it happened that Bob Bridger was frightened from his position as conductor to become a detective.

CHAPTER II.

BOB BRIDGER'S TRIP TO LONDON.

On the Saturday following Bridger sailed for England.

Arriving in London, he hastened to the unpretentious building near the House of Parliament known as Scotland Yard, the headquarters of the London police.

Entering, he stated his business to the sergeant at the desk.

"You are an entire stranger in London?" asked the officer.

"Precisely," returned Bridger. "In all Europe there is nothing with which I am familiar save, possibly, the face of the man I seek."

"You will then require an assistant, but whom to assign I am puzzled to know. Our men are all very busy at present—at least such of them as I might choose to aid you best. Let me see—"

At that moment a tall, handsome young man entered hastily from the street.

His attire, although not showy, was as faultless as if he had stepped forth from a bandbox, and any lady would have voted him on sight a charming young gentleman.

His air was social and easy going—that of a man who could bounce into a better acquaintanceship in five minutes than the majority of men could accomplish, with the same subject, in as many years.

His face was clean shaven, his features were regular, and his eyes the most magnetic and marvelous that Bridger had ever beheld—save in a looking-glass.

They were large, black, kind, laughing eyes, but so clear and piercing that, as they squarely met Bridger's searching gray orbs, a mutual and involuntary shudder coursed through the nerves of the two young men.

"Ah, here is Fandon!" said the sergeant. "I'll send him out with you."

"In an instant I'll be with you," quoth Fandon, and he darted by to an inner office to report a case he had been at work upon.

"If any man can aid you he can," said the officer. "He is the youngest man on the metropolitan force, but there is no shrewder detective in Scotland Yard."

A moment later Fandon stood at the desk awaiting orders.

The sergeant introduced Bridger as an American detective, and stated the nature of his business.

Bridger then, at his request, gave an accurate description of Richard Hanford.

As he finished speaking the Scotch detective grasped his hand and shook it warmly.

"It's a pleasure once in a while to shake a live Yankee's hand, isn't it, sergeant?" he said. "They have things pretty much their own way over there, with their baked

beans, pumpkin pies, border ruffians, wild Indians, and California gold mines: but, betimes, we have to give them a point or two, eh? Ha, ha, ha! But now let me see, your name is—" he continued, addressing Bridger.

"Bridger."

"But the first, short name, is—"

"Bob."

"Bobe, eh? Well, my short name is Roe. Remember that, Bobe, and never say Fandon."

Bridger noticed that Fandon spoke with a slight Scotch accent, and, from the levity of his manner, began to fear that, notwithstanding his marvelous eyes, the prospect of being materially aided in the hunt for Hanford by this tastily dressed joker was so small that, withdrawing his hand somewhat curtly from the Scotch detective's grasp, he asked, abruptly:

"Well, is there any hope of finding this Richard Hanford in London?"

"Bless your heart, yes!" responded Fandon, pulling forth his watch as he spoke. "It is now ten o'clock. At four P. M. I'll wager you a mug of beer we'll have the 'darbeys' on his wrists, and every dollar he has left in our possession."

Bridger started back in astonishment at this sudden return to business-like principles, and ejaculated:

"Surely you don't mean it?"

"Mean it? Nothing simpler. I've had that youth's measure in my eye for a fortnight past. He's registered at Somerset House as Emanuel Picard, and his manners have become as grand as his name. You wouldn't take him for a Yankee clerk now, for he has so diligently set about aping the London swell that he has succeeded in fashioning himself into nearly as disagreeable a jackass as his prototype. And, finding that the aforesaid metropolitan jackass attends the races, he has necessarily learned to 'talk horse' by the yard, 'ba jove, you know.' In truth, I consider that about the swiftest move we can make to clip his spreading feathers will be to drive to Epsom Downs' race course direct. My word for it, we'll find him there at to day's special meeting, strutting about among the book-makers, and giving himself airs as huge as the ship he came over in. Come, we'll hail a cab and be off."

Fandon instructed the cabman, who came at his beck, to pull up first at Millbank prison.

As the twain rolled off in the vehicle, Fandon said:

"Tell me, now, Bobe, are you connected with the New York force?"

"No; I am simply the railroad company's special."

"Looking up rogues that break into goods-vans and the like, eh?"

"This is my first case."

"Then you have only recently become an officer?"

"Yes. Until recently I have been a conductor, or, as you say here, a guard."

"Then your present position is a promotion?"

"I do not so regard it."

"Then how came you to make the change?"

"I was frightened into it."

"Frightened into it?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"In a very mysterious way."

At the Scotch detective's suggestion, Bridger then narrated the entire story of the night-express mystery as shown in the chapter preceding.

As Bridger proceeded Fandon became intensely interested.

He turned half way about on the seat, grasped Bridger's hand, and looking directly into his eyes, drank in eagerly every word.

When Bridger had ended his tale Fandon said:

"Bobe, tell me, am I to understand that you believe in the unseen forces of which you speak?"

"How can I disbelieve when such evidence has been thrust upon me?"

"Then your tale has simply brought coals to New Castle, Bobe."

"How so?"

"Because I am one of the most superstitious fellows you ever saw. And, although I have never experienced this telegraphy of thoughts to another's brain, I certainly believe that my own brain has been telegraphed upon while in slumber."

"By whom?"

"By some unseen power."

"Explain."

"You will not deride or call me insane?"

"Not I."

"Then, at times, when I am sleeping, I have the most wonderful dreams. Dreams that widely differ from the common run of dreams that every one has. For instance,

when I was but twelve years old, the night before my father was shot, I dreamed I saw him enter a dark store-room. He flashed the eye of his dark-lantern, as he advanced, upon the floor-way. It was strewn with cloths, and a large bag stood nearly half full of goods. Crouching beneath a table, in one corner, he perceived two thieves. He pointed his revolver toward them and bade them come forth. As he spoke a burly burglar arose softly from behind a bale of cloth to his left, leveled a pistol, and fired. My father fell dead upon the floor, and the three men lifted their bag and hastily departed."

"Did you speak to your father of this dream?"

"I tried to do so, but he had gone from the house in the morning before I arose, and although I searched everywhere for him I could not find him. My God! if I only might have found him—for under the precise circumstances of the dream he met his death on the night afterward."

"Wonderful!"

"But stranger yet, Bobe, the faces of the three burglars were fixed on my memory. I looked through the Rogues' Gallery pictures and found them. The man who shot my father was called Tober Jack, and his two pals were known as Flopper and Cole. Detective John Plinny, who had been a great friend of my father, told me that a dream was no evidence, and bade me keep quiet about it. He had some faith in the mystery, however, and shadowed the three burglars to a 'boozing ken' which they frequented. I made myself up like a 'kinchin cove,' and hung about the place. Plinny furnished me with plenty of money, and as I spent it freely and talked thieves' 'patter' like a veteran, I soon got into the good graces of 'Liverpool' Sal, the landlady. I became a great favorite of the crooks that frequented the place, and they looked on me as a shrewd young 'prig.' One night Plinny shadowed 'Tober' Jack and his two pals, Flopper and Cole, to the 'ken.' He gave me instructions how to proceed, and waited in readiness with his men. I entered the place, and at once began chatting with Liverpool Sal, who had taken a great fancy to me. The place was filled with thieves—men and women. The air was blue with tobacco smoke, and the barmaids busy passing about drinks, bread, cheese, and the like, among the noisy throng. 'Tober' Jack and his pals sat at a table by themselves drinking and talking. At length 'Tober' Jack arose from his seat and crossed the room toward a woman who had beckoned to him. As he passed me I

nudged him, and said in an undertone: 'Lay low, Jack, 'Blackfriars!' "

He stopped, and bending his ear close to my lips, said:

"What's up?"

"Flopper and Cole have grown 'leaky,' and I 'twigged' them 'cacklin' to a 'fly-cop' about you 'croakin' the 'crusher' in the store."

"When?"

"Yesterday. So lay low, for they're workin' with the 'fly-cops' to 'pull you in,' and 'twist' you."

"'Tober' Jack started back, and a look that meant murder flashed from his eyes.

"He glanced furiously toward the two 'cracksmen' in the corner, then, catching my arm, dragged me toward them.

"Are those the men?" he cried, as he paused near the astonished burglars.

"Both of them," I replied. "I heard them 'peachin' to a 'fly-cop' on the 'walk.' "

"'What's the "kid" givin' "guff" on? Come here!' roared Flopper, and he made a move as if to clutch me. But 'Tober' Jack shoved me back out of his reach, and pulling forth a 'billy,' knocked him senseless on the floor. A general uproar ensued in the 'ken.' Meanwhile 'Tober' Jack attacked Cole, and the fight was waxing hot between them, when Plinny and his men entered the 'ken,' and striking right and left, secured the three men and led them away.

"Flopper and Cole were now easily 'worked' by Plinny in their cells. They were led to believe that 'Tober' Jack, to shield himself, had charged them with the murder, and put up the job with the police to have them arrested. The result was they turned queen's evidence, were sent up for light terms, while 'Tober' Jack was convicted of the murder, confessed it, and was hanged."

"Is Plinny now on the force?" asked Bridger.

"No; he is an old man, became rheumatic, and is now employed in the British Museum. He is the only man to whom I mention my superstitions, and he will relish greatly to hear me tell him of your strange experience on the railway."

"By the way," added the Scotch detective, "to show you his interest and friendship, Bobe, the other day a case came to the museum containing, among other things, six spirit glasses such as are made and used by East Indian necromancers to produce sleep. They are so artfully contrived that I have never yet found a man who could hold

one in his hand and gaze at it steadily for even five minutes without falling off into deep slumber. Well, one of these glasses I speak of was broken, and so Plinny marked two broken on the bill, and placed one in his pocket for me. And here it is."

As the Scotch detective spoke he produced what seemed to be an oval, flat-bottomed, circular paper-weight, some three inches in diameter, the bottom of which was of thin sheet-iron, carefully fitted and cemented upon the glass.

"I warn you," continued Fandon, "not to gaze long or intently at it, for so sure as the warmth and electricity from your hand causes the fluid within to move you are gone."

"I'll risk it," returned Bridger, taking the glass in his hand.

He perceived that it was heavy, and, on closer inspection, seemed a cleverly contrived ink-stand.

It was filled with a jet-black fluid, while directly in its center, and beneath the upper glass, was an open glass circle an inch and a half in diameter, which appeared to be the mouth of an inner bottle.

Any one would have considered it a clever puzzle, the puzzle being how to get at the ink.

Soon after Bridger took hold of it the fluid began to pour over into the mouth of the inner bottle.

At every instant, as he gazed, the movement became faster, and at length it seemed to bring up dregs from the bottom, which appeared to be tiny particles of silver and gold.

The current of the fluid now assumed a regular course.

It rushed outward in centrifugal motion upon the bottom of the glass, and then up its sides, with marvelous swiftness.

At the top it turned in, in centripetal motion, and plunged down in the center, forming a busy whirlpool.

Bridger became fascinated looking at it. He could not have withdrawn his eyes from it if he had tried.

The fluid was no longer black, but a bright gray.

Gradually the plunge of the whirlpool's center seemed to grow deeper and its circumference greater and greater, until at length it appeared to Bridger as if he were hanging over the edge of a great circular Niagara.

The roar of an ocean of rushing, plunging, plashing waters seemed also to sound in his ears.

An instant more, and, with a gentle start, as if he had plunged downward, all was dark.

Bridger saw or heard nothing more.

He was asleep.

Perceiving his condition, Fandon rested his hand beneath the hand that held the glass.

"Bobe," said he, "you see I am Richard Hanford. You have the 'ruffles' on my wrists, and the company's money in your possession. Now, what are you going to do with me?"

Without removing his stolid stare from the glass Bridger replied:

"Well, Hanford, although you richly merit punishment, the officers of the company, out of regard for your heart-broken mother, have resolved to find you a situation elsewhere, and try you again."

The Scotch detective would have continued his experiment with the enforced sleeper further had not the vehicle at that moment pulled up in front of Millbank prison.

As his eyes fell on the gloomy walls the errand that called him thither flashed vividly to his mind.

Removing the glass with his left hand, he grasped Bridger's hand with his right, and gave it a sudden jerk.

"Ho, there, Bobe! Wake up!" he cried.

Bridger started up wildly as if in terror, and, plunging suddenly forward, brought up against the front portion of the cab, dragging Fandon from his seat.

"Wake up, Bobe, wake up!" shouted the Scotch detective, wincing under the steel-like clasp of Bridger's hand on his.

"Oh, I see it all!" exclaimed Bridger, as the situation dawned with his returning faculties.

Then dropping to a sitting posture on the cab's front seat, he rubbed his eyes and smiled.

"The glass was too much for you, Bobe. There's no mistake, you were either asleep—or mesmerized."

"I feel as if I had been."

"I made you believe I was Richard Hanford, and you informed me what you proposed doing with me."

"Did, eh?"

"Have you no recollection of it?"

"All that I recollect is, that when I awoke I was possessed of the idea that I was a garroter. My hands seemed in pillory, my back bare, and I about to be flogged."

"Then here between ourselves, Bobe, we have another instance of the telegraphing of thought from brain to brain, for when I jerked your hand to wake you I was thinking intently of a garroter whom I arrested a fortnight since,

and who is to be flogged this very hour in the jail within. In fact, I fear we may be too late for the flogging, and I would not miss this particular execution for the world. Did you ever see a culprit flogged, Bobe?"

"Never."

"Well, jump off with me. Come."

CHAPTER III.

"SEE-REE-GO! MASTER FANDON, SEE-REE-GO!"

Springing as he spoke from the vehicle, the Scotch detective led the way up the stone steps and into the corridor of the prison, Bridger following at his elbow.

Through the hall-way, and back through grated doorways, which obedient turnkeys opened, Fandon conducted his companion to the gloomy jail-yard.

The walls of the prison inclosed it upon all sides, and from their grated windows peered upon the scene beneath a horde of eager, vicious faces.

An upright beam crossed by a frame, in which were pilloried a culprit's hands, stood at the yard's center.

The victim was a giant in frame, tall, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, sinewy—a man in the prime of his years and strength.

His brawny body was stripped bare to the waist.

A score of solemn-visaged keepers stood guard near, while a burly keeper wielded the ugly 'cat.'

Already nine of the twenty lashes had fallen.

A hundred purple welts meshed the sufferer's back, and attested the severity of his punishment, while where the ridges crossed, the bruised, black blood had burst forth and stood in heavy drops upon the skin.

The tortured flesh seemed fairly to creep upon the man's bones.

His forehead was pressed violently forward against the cross-beam, as if he strove, by self-inflicted pain, to offset the torture he endured.

The sturdy executioner calmly, determinedly, with all his strength, and with the regularity of a machine, applied the whip.

As the tenth stroke fell the frenzied victim suddenly threw back his head.

Its covering of sandy hair was closely clipped.

In size it was small and appeared utterly out of proportion upon the man's gigantic frame.

The forehead was receding, the mouth huge, the lips large, the chin massive, the nostrils wide, the nose flat, the eyes wild, staring, and full.

Without doubt they were the head and features of an idiot.

The expression of the distorted, idiotic face was so horrible that Bridger, with a sickening feeling, averted his glance, while a manly tear dimmed the eye of the Scotch detective.

Fixing his eyes in a vacant stare upon the wall at his rear the poor idiot cried out, shrilly, in the supreme agony of the instant:

"See-ree-go! 'e! 'e! 'e! See-ree go!"

It was not the cry of a human being, but that of a wild beast stricken down by the hunter's dart.

As the startling cry rang through the corridors of the prison a deep toned muttering of condemnation came in response from the convicts at the windows.

The idiot, with a quick movement, dashed his head violently forward against the crossbeam.

The executioner had drawn the "cat" to give the eleventh stroke when his eye met the eye of the Scotch detective.

The rabble at the windows were quick to perceive that Fandon had given the burly keeper the "office" to lighten up his blows.

The stroke descended apparently with its usual force, but the cat's lashes struck the bruised and benumbed back of the wretched man so gently that he barely felt them.

A loud cheer rang out in recognition of Fandon's act from the felons above.

Perceiving instinctively that a friend was nigh the idiot again threw back his head and glanced about in search of the one whose influence had eased his torture.

When his eyes rested upon Fandon his lips parted in a broad smile, and his features assumed a look of servile adoration, such as the dog bestows upon his master.

He did not remove his glance, nor notice the nine mock-earnest blows while they descended.

When the twenty lashes had been given, the culprit loosed from pillory, and his blue woolen shirt adjusted to place, the Scotch detective stepped forward and took his hand.

"I did all I could for you, Billy," said he, "both before the beak and here. Now, be a good lad, and do what they ask of you in prison, and I'll do what I can to shorten your term."

The idiot's features beamed in delight, and clasping Fandon's hand warmly, he said :

"See-ree-go ! Master Fandon, see-ree-go !"

The utterance was now quaint and musical, and expressed heartfelt gratitude as clearly as an orator would have done in words of meaning.

As the keepers led him away Silly Billy's eyes continued to rest upon his benefactor, and as he passed from sight under the arched door-way leading to the cells within, his voice rang out once more, cheerily, and as clear as a bugle call :

"See-ree-go ! Master Fandon, see-ree-go !"

CHAPTER IV.

"A PLUNGER NIPPED IN THE BUD."

"It was an outrage on justice to whip that poor addlepate," said Fandon, as he and Bridger re-entered the cab and drove off. "The magistrate who inflicted that punishment on an idiot should be flogged himself."

"It was the most horrible sight I ever beheld," concurred Bridger. "So long as I live that shrill, despairing cry will conjure itself to my ears, and that tortured, idiotic face will be pictured upon my brain."

"And then, Bobe," continued the Scotch detective, "aside from my sympathy at this wrong done Billy, I have the deepest interest in him—for he is a central figure in one of those mysterious dreams I told you of. True, it is at best only a dream, but I have dreamed it a hundred times, over and over again. I see in it a beautiful girl who, hand in hand with 'Silly' Billy, seems to be wandering in a rivulet of blood, upon which float thousands of gold coins. What the portent is I cannot say, but I firmly believe that my future is encoupled with that of yonder poor idiot in some deep mystery yet to be unearthed."

An hour later the cab drew to a stand among the throng of vehicles at the Epsom Downs' race-course.

Alighting upon the grass, the Scotch detective and Bridger entered the "Bird-cage," or saddling paddock.

Their eyes soon rested upon the foolish young man they sought.

Strutting amid the noisy "swells" who surrounded the book-makers, note-book and pencil in hand, industriously sporting a fashionable eye-glass, clad in the most showy manner, and giving himself the airs of a crack-brained lord,

Richard Hanford was by all odds the most important-appearing individual of his years on the course.

A jockey wearing a scarlet cap and green shirt, at that moment dashed by upon a fine chestnut horse which he was warming up for the coming race.

Richard thought he saw a chance for profitable speculation in the flying heels of the chestnut, and stepped grandly toward a book-maker, intending to wager a few odd pounds of the raliroad company's money.

"I say now, ye know," quoth Richard, crowding the cockney drawl to its fullest, "what odds are you laying against the chestnut just by?"

"Twenty to one, sir," returned the gambler.

At those figyahs I shall lay you, aw, let me see—"

"Don't bet your money on the bob-tail nag, young man," quoth Fandon, touching Richard upon the shoulder. "Come with me and I will introduce you to the winning horse."

"Sir!" exclaimed Richard, starting back in astonishment and eying Fandon in a highly aristocratic manner through his eye-glass. "Ya-as, let me understand, aw, ye know—you are a tout-taw, I presume?"

The Scotch detective threw back the fold of his coat, and tapping his golden badge gently, said, with a wink:

"Yes, Richard, I am a touter of this class. The fact is, Richard, the folks in America have suddenly found that they cannot exist without you. And I am sure your mamma would say you were a real naughty boy did she know that you were betting the money you took from the raliroad company's safe on horses."

Never did a dashing "plunger" wilt more suddenly.

Richard Hanford's airs vanished on the instant.

His face became deathly pale, his eyes started from his head, his eye-glass dropped from its place, his tally-book fell from his hands, and his knees smote violently together.

"Oh, dear, how you—you frighten me!" he stammered. "I assure you, sir, you are mistaken in the man. I did not do it. I am Emanuel Picard."

"No, no, Hanford. Up and up now," quoth Bridger, stepping forward and trying to look serious.

"Conductor Bridger! Save me, oh, save me!" shrieked the terrified youth, recognizing Bridger, and extending his trembling hands imploringly toward him.

"I am not Conductor Bridger," returned Bob, sternly. 'Tis true I have in times past acted as conductor that I might get the gauge of the company's rogues. But little did I then dream that you, Richard Hanford, would be the

first to fall thus into the awful clutches of the law. How terrible! You are now destined, I fear, to pass the few remaining days of your guilty visit to England in an English dungeon, and ultimately to be taken thence from whence you came to stand your trial—and may the august powers have mercy upon you!”

“Alas! yes. So young! So handsome, too!” sighed Fandon, gloomily, and he snapped a pair of steel “ruffles” on Hanford’s wrists.

When he felt the cold manacles clasp his flesh, and his ear caught the rattle of the chain between them, Hanford broke down completely.

The abject terror of the captured embezzler was pitiful to behold, nor could he find hope of lenity in the impassive eyes of his captors.

They had determined to give the wretched young man a fright which he would not soon forget, and, utterly regardless of his tears and prayers, they run him along amid the jeering throng, and slamming him into the cab, drove off with him.

The two detectives soon had in their possession all that remained of the railroad company’s sixty thousand dollars.

The funds recovered were equal to forty-five thousand dollars in American money, aside from which were sundry rare diamonds, and jewels, and a valuable gold watch, which the foolish young man had bought.

The case was complete at the hour the Scotch detective had named, and at four P M. Bridger slipped into his hand a one hundred pound Bank of England note.

That same night, bidding Fandon a kind adieu, Bridger departed by rail from London, in charge of the captured clerk, and the recovered valuables, and intent on catching a steamer due to sail on the morrow from Liverpool.

CHAPTER V.

THE FACE AT THE WINDOW.

Notwithstanding the best efforts of the railway officials the story of Richard Hanford’s embezzlement and flight gained publicity, and when Bridger returned from England in charge of the penitent young man and the recovered money it was to find himself lauded in the papers as one of America’s most skilled detectives.

To Bridger’s credit be it said his talents enabled him to

keep pace with the prominence he had thus cheaply attained.

He received a dozen letters in as many days bidding for his services, and at length accepted a position under the Government.

Carefully studying the ways of the criminal classes and the methods of the best detective officers, executing every commission given in his charge with intelligence and alacrity, he rapidly advanced to a front rank in his adopted profession.

When he had been two years in the service of the government an incident occurred, ever after which he became the department's first choice for any case requiring thorough skill and reckless daring.

A gang of outlaws were engaged in illegal traffic, defrauding the Government of revenue, near St. Louis.

They had effectually eluded several tried officers who had been sent to work up the case against them, and had at length murdered a Government detective in cold blood.

The marshal of the district, as a last resort, had laid the case before the Secretary of the Treasury at Washington.

That gentleman was in a quandary what move to make in the matter, when an old, gray-headed employee of the office suddenly suggested :

"I tell you, Mr. Secretary, there's only one thing to do about it."

"And what's that?" demanded the Secretary.

"Send 'Old' Bridger out there."

Acting on the old timer's suggestion, the Secretary sent for Bridger, and was greatly surprised to see in him a tall, handsome, keen eyed young man of twenty-five.

However, he dispatched Bridger to the aid of the district marshal in Missouri.

A fortnight later his attention was again called to Bridger by the receipt of a report which the detective had been instructed to forward when anything definite had been accomplished.

Reading it over, he called the old employee to his side, and said :

"By the way, why did you in speaking of Detective Bridger, the other day, call him 'Old' Bridger? The officer is quite young."

"Well," responded the old man, "I've watched the doings of every one of these secret service men that have acted for this department for many years back, and I have never known one of all the lot to succeed so uniformly in

all he has been given to do as Bridger has done. There's no mistake about it. Bridger's a war-horse. So I call him 'Old' Bridger, something after the way folks call death 'Old' Death. If either of them gets on the trail of a man he'd better throw up the sponge."

"It would seem so," returned the secretary, amused at the old man's explanation. "Here is his report on the Missouri case: 'Have secured ample evidence to convict the four men suspected. Was ably aided by the marshal of the district. The men are in prison.'"

From that time on Bridger was kept on the go from one end of the country to the other, and became the hero of many desperate encounters and skillful and daring arrests.

In the fall of the year '73 he had barely ended working up a case of fraud connected with the navy-yard at Mare Island, California, when he received instructions to proceed without delay to New York.

The nature of the New York case was smuggling, and as it involved several prominent firms now in business, I will not give the particulars.

However, as Bridger journeyed eastward he stopped off at the headquarters of the railway company under whose employ he had acted as conductor.

It was evening when he entered the company's offices, and he found the superintendent and the general manager in consultation.

The superintendent explained to Bridger that General Grant was expected to arrive some time during the night on a special train, and that it was to proceed eastward over the line to Kane Station, to which point the illustrious passenger journeyed on a visit to his old friend, General Kane.

Owing to an uncertainty regarding the time of the special's arrival, no definite schedule could be arranged for it, and it would have to be "wild-catted" over the road, requiring a skillful conductor.

For reasons which the superintendent did not care to name, he did not wish to take his conductors from their regular runs, and he asked Bridger to run the train through.

Glad to have command of a train on the old route for a few hours' run, as a reminder of old times, he accepted the officer's offer.

Shortly after midnight the train glided in upon the connecting line.

It consisted of two palace sleeping-cars, a baggage-car, and engine.

When the engine, baggage-car, and baggage had been changed, Bridger, who had carefully mapped his run upon the time-table given him at the office, informed the engineer what he was to do, and gave the signal to go.

On entering the first sleeping-coach of the running train an unexpected surprise awaited Bridger.

Dan Colgate, his fellow train-man on the nights of the occurrence of the night express mystery, had charge of the two sleeping-cars.

After a warm exchange of greetings, the two young men dropped into a seat in a vacant state-room of the car, and began to compare notes—Bridger mentally vowing that he would touch no sleeping passenger that night at all events.

Dan Colgate imparted the information that General and Mrs. Grant, accompanied by two servants, occupied the rear car, while sleeping in the car in which they sat were five reporters, the ticket-agent of Millford station, and a friend of the last-named gentleman.

The ticket-agent and his friend had been permitted to ride from Cleveland at the agent's request.

The conversation then turned, among other topics, to the night express mystery of three years before.

The fate of the German, the raftman, and the other passenger, and how mysteriously they had met their deaths, was talked over from beginning to end.

In the connection Bridger narrated his experience in London, spoke of the East Indian necromantic glass, and of the strange forewarnings of the Scotch detective's dreams.

It was nearing daybreak, but still night, when the swift-running train passed Maysville station.

A strange idea came into Bridger's brain that he would step out upon the dark platform and look, as the train swept by, at the spot where the two passengers had plunged to their deaths, as if lured to the deed by the touch of his hand.

The night was cloudy and not a star overhead.

The sparks amid the lurid column of smoke overhead but dimly lit the dark landscape on either side of the swaying train.

As the fatal spot drew near, seizing the iron brakewheel, Bridger leaned forth in the rush of air at the side of the train, and held low his lamp that he might see it.

He imagined, in his mind's eye, a man springing from where he stood at that speed, and a strange feeling of superstition possessed him as he did so.

The spot where the two passengers had met their deaths had been marked by a huge white stone, and as the train shot by it, Bridger turned to enter the car-door.

As the rays of his lamp fell upon the glass in the door he perceived the face of a man peering through it.

The lights were out save Dan Colgate's lamp in the sleeper, and, in the rays of Bridger's lamp, the face seemed pale and livid as that of one dead.

A cold shiver ran through his nerves, for he was assured that the features were familiar to him.

Might it be that at this fatal spot another mystery like that of the Corsican brother, had arisen to confront him?

He lifted his light that he might be sure. There could be no mistake.

It was the face of Roe Fandon, the Scotch detective.

CHAPTER VI.

PINKERTON'S SPOTTERS.

"Bah! whether it be Roe Fandon dead or Roe Fandon living I want to see him just the same," muttered Bridger, and placing his hand upon the door-knob, he entered the car.

The Scotch detective, and not his ghost, stepped back from the door as it opened.

He had arisen from his bunk and approached the end of the car with somewhat of the same intent that had impelled Bridger to venture without.

When he perceived Bridger moving about upon the dark platforms at the very spot where had occurred the night express mystery, he had likewise believed himself either dreaming or confronting his friend's ghost.

Bridger had supposed that Fandon was beyond the ocean, and doing duty in London.

And the Scotch detective had been reliably informed that Bridger was in California, doing secret service work for the Government.

The lamp that Bridger carried was one of the new-style lamps made at Rochester for conductors' use.

The upper half of its globe was of green glass, casting a ghastly hue upon the most healthful face on which the rays penetrating it chanced to fall.

Bridger had never used such a lamp before.

Under such circumstances it was but little wonder that the two detectives were sorely puzzled at thus meeting.

Within the car each glared at the other, and involun-

tarily reached forth his right hand as if to assure himself that the form confronting him was an apparition or body of flesh and blood.

Becoming mutually convinced that the latter was the case their hands clasped in warm greeting.

"Hello, Bobe! What in the name of Uncle Sam brought you here to-night?"

"Roe Fandon, by the Scotland Yard! And what, in the name of all that's queer are you doing on this train?"

Thus both exclaimed at a breath.

"Uncle Sam's business."

"Scotland Yard work."

They answered together.

"I took you for a ghost," quoth Fandon.

"And I thought you one. By Jove, you look as pale as one."

And Bridger held up his lamp as he spoke.

"And so do you."

"But I never felt better in my life."

"Nor I."

"It's only the glare of that fancy green lamp," suggested Dan Colgate.

"Come here—I want to talk to you," said Bridger, and he led the Scotch detective to the state-room just vacated by Dan Colgate.

"Now give an account of yourself," demanded Bridger, as the twain sat down.

"I'll hear what brought you here first."

"Briefly, then—one week since, I received orders in San Francisco to repair at once to New York, there to look up a case of smuggling which may occupy a month of my time. I stopped off on my way to see my old superintendent, and he requested me to run this special down, as he did not wish to take any of his conductors from the regular runs, for reasons he did not care to name. To accommodate him I am taking the train through. Now, it's your turn. Go on."

"Well, then, Bobe, I represented the reasons why the superintendent did not wish to take his conductors from their regular runs."

"You don't mean to say that you are—"

"'Spotting' the conductors and agents of the line."

"Who is doing it?"

"Pinkerton."

"And so you are working for Pinkerton?"

"As I have intimated, I have charge of his 'spotters' on this line."

"I thought you said Scotland Yard work brought you here?"

"So it did. I am killing two birds with one stone."

"Explain."

"You remember 'Silly' Billy, the garroter?"

"See-ree-go? How could I forget him?"

"And the dream of the pretty girl waddling at his side in a rivulet of blood on which gold coins seemed to float?"

"Yes."

"Well, the dream's out."

"And has proved—"

"True."

"And where is 'Silly' Billy?"

"Well, as I that day promised him, I tried my best to get his term in prison shortened."

"And how did you succeed?"

"Badly. He became unruly one day, and tumbled about a dozen keepers as if they had been babes. The result was that instead of his term being shortened he got a year more."

"That was bad for Billy."

"Ay, but good for my purposes."

"How so?"

"Some months past I had my attention drawn to a haul of odd trinkets which had been made by burglars from a pawnbroker's shop in Petticoat Lane. In looking the stuff over I came across a gold locket attached to a lady's gold chain. There was something quaint in the jewel's appearance which took my eye. On one side was engraven 'Alfonse,' and on the other 'Alice.' What was my astonishment, Bobe, on opening the locket, to find that it contained the miniatures of a dark-eyed young man, and of a beautiful, blue-eyed young woman—the very picture of the fair maiden of my dream!"

"A marvelous tally!"

"True, Bobe, and the discovery assured me beyond doubt that the dream was of the same prophetic nature as that by which I tracked down my father's slayer. I at once purchased the trinket from the pawnbroker, and endeavored to trace it back to its original owner, but at the time failed. My only hope then was to fall back upon the information vouchsafed by the dream, and await Billy's exit from prison.

On the morning he was liberated from Millbank jail I

was on hand, made up as a vagrant. He set forth toward Chelsea at a rapid gait, and thence struck a country road. I followed him carefully, and a fine pedestrian experience he gave me. Late in the afternoon he turned suddenly from the highway into a by-lane. At its side, among the fields, stood a two-story stone cottage and several hundred yards to its rear was a large stone mansion, which seemed untenanted. A quarter of a mile beyond this was a stone stable, and adjoining it a fenced practice track. I took the place to be the estate of some sporting gentleman owning a stable of race-horses.

"A hundred fields belonging to the estate, and dotted here and there with the cottages of sub-farmers, were under cultivation in garden truck

"At the two-story cottage 'Silly' Billy paused, knocked upon the door, and entered. A few minutes later I tapped upon the same door. It opened, and I beheld before me in the door-way a beautiful girl of eighteen, whose features were identical with those of the miniature and dream.

"As our eyes met I started in astonishment, and so did she. The entire appearance of the fair creature, the deep blush which suffused her delicately chiseled face, and the gentle grace of her movements attested her innocence and intelligence. And yet there was something in the startled look of her beautiful blue eyes, which plainly said that she not only knew that I was a detective, but had expected my coming.

" 'I am traveling and thirsty,' said I. 'Would you kindly give me a glass of water?'

"Ere she might respond a rough man, in the garb of a farmer, stepped forward, and rudely pushed her aside within the room. The man was some sixty years old, but strongly built and well-preserved. He wore a short-cropped, gray beard, and his features were uninviting and surly. Glaring furiously toward me, he pointed back toward the highway, and banged the door shut in my face.

"He had, however, not deprived me of a hasty glance within, and I perceived that the family were at their evening meal. A dark-eyed and not uncomely Irishwoman of forty, whom I supposed the farmer's wife, sat at the table. Opposite her, as if he had been one of the family, 'Silly' Billy had been assigned a plate. He had fallen to with such a vengeance, and was so wholly absorbed in the viands before him, that he did not notice me.

"Obedient to the farmer's inhospitable gesture, I turned toward the highway. When I had passed a hundred yards

from the cottage I glanced about, and perceived the girl peering toward me from a window in the second story, whither she had doubtless fled, girl-like, to weep over the farmer's rebuff. Her bright eyes were dimmed with tears, and her look as she watched me was both wistful and sad. It was evident that she was not a member of the farmer's family, and that a mystery enveloped her life which she trusted the future to raise.

"Suddenly dropping upon her knees, she clasped her hands and lifted her fair face, now white as marble, toward heaven in an attitude of prayer.

"A minute later she glanced toward me again, her bright blue eyes seeming to ask if I understood the hope of her heart.

"I threw back the ragged coat I wore, displayed my badge, and placed a finger upon my lips enjoining her to silence.

"She smiled, bowed, placed a finger upon her own fair lips, and waving her handkerchief toward me, vanished from the window."

"But we are closely approaching Millford station, are we not?" asked the Scotch detective, suddenly pausing in his narrative, and glancing from the car window, through which the light of dawning day now poured.

"Five miles yet," returned Bridger.

"Well, I must awake Simonton, the Millford ticket agent, and leave you there, Bobe. But fail not to communicate with me through Pinkerton's New York agency, and look for letters from me.

"You see," continued Fandon, in a whisper, "I have been on a speculative, theatrical 'piping' trip with Agent Simonton to Cleveland. He has been selling tickets twice and thrice over and 'whacking-up' with the conductors. Feeling rich, the idea has entered their heads to start a variety theater in the oil regions. To them I am Sam Josalyn, a person understanding well the management of such a show, and the visit to Cleveland was with the view of arranging the purchase of the seats and scenery of a defunct theater there."

"I understand," returned Bridger. "But you can rest easy regarding the agent, for we must take the side track a mile this side of Millford to let the West-bound express pass, and I will see that Simonton is up in time."

He then called to Dan Colgate, and after bidding him arouse the sleeping agent, turned to hear the continuation of the Scotch detective's story.

"I returned that night to London," continued Fandon. "I then followed up the case from day to day until I had fully established the girl's identity, and unearthed the fact of a dark and bloody crime, which, though committed seventeen years before, had never been suspected. I placed the case as it now stood before the inspector of Scotland Yard, and he at once dispatched me, with a squad of officers at my back, and ordered the arrest of every person found in the farmer's cottage. But we were doomed to disappointment, for we found the cottage empty and deserted. I traced the parties 'wanted' to Liverpool, and thence to America.

"When I arrived in New York I sought the Pinkerton agency, knowing that the Pinkerton detective system embraced the entire land. On exhibiting the miniature, one of the detectives present assured me that he had beheld the fair face of the lady 'wanted' a week previous. He had barely returned in ill health, from charge of the 'gang of spotters' at work on this road, and was confident that he had seen the girl riding in the cars. Where she had gotten on or off he failed to remember, but he believed that she was living somewhere upon the line. As the agency was working all its men, the manager, who had been fairly impressed by the letter of introduction I carried, proffered me charge of the 'gang of spotters' here at work. And perceiving that I could kill two birds with one stone, here I am."

At this moment Simonton, the Millford ticket-agent, entered the state-room.

He was greatly surprised to find Bridger again enacting the role of conductor upon the line, and while he extended his greetings the train slowed up for the Millford switch.

Bridger jumped off to open the switch, and as the train pulled in upon the siding to await the passage of the express, the Scotch detective and the agent dropped from it to keep him company.

It was now broad day.

The sun had risen above the eastward mountain tops, and the songs of birds and the odor of new-mown hay came borne upon the balmy morning air from the dew-sparkled grasses that covered the green fields adjacent.

General Grant had left his bed, and taking advantage of the train's stop, and lured by the bright scene without, stepped forth upon the special's rear platform.

The three men at the switch lifted their hats to the distinguished soldier, and he returned their salute.

Soon after the heavy express train came puffing along.

Every one on board learned that it was here to pass the special, and from every window and platform train-men and passengers peered forth, anxious to catch a glimpse of the famous general.

To accommodate the general desire, the engineer of the express had slacked down to a fifteen mile-an-hour gait.

When the watchers espied the general, standing on the platform, hats and handkerchiefs waved busily, and cheer after cheer rent the air.

As the train rolled by the switch-beam a second series of yells started up from the train-men in recognition of Bridger's sudden reappearance in his old role.

While Bridger bowed in acknowledgment a young lady at one of the car windows suddenly drew aside her vail, exposing a face of radiant beauty.

Her bright blue eyes, with the startled expression of those of the wild fawn, darted a glance of recognition upon Fandon.

The Scotch detective made a sudden spring forward as if to board the train.

It was now speeding past at a rate too swift for any one to do so in safety.

Bridger dashed forward and grasped Fandon just as he was on the point of making a leap to catch the car, and the train sped on without him.

CHAPTER VII.

“MURDER ! HELP ! POLICE !”

The two detectives were tongue-tied in the agent's presence, but Bridger perceived that the Scotch detective had suffered a grievous disappointment in being unable to board the express.

At Millford station the agent and Fandon bade Bridger adieu, and the special pursued its way.

Landing General Grant and party safely at Kane station, Bridger departed upon the next east-bound train for New York.

Arriving there he at once set to work on the smuggling case.

After working on the case for a week he found it convenient to take rooms in a house on Bond street.

One afternoon, a fortnight later, he penned proofs in

detail, thoroughly compromising two prominent business houses.

At eight that evening he returned to his rooms bearing a large envelope, which he had procured to inclose his report to Washington.

As he ascended the stair-way from the street he heard voices in the dark nook at the rear hall-way of the second floor.

He turned about, but seeing no one, continued above.

Entering his apartments he placed his report in the envelope, sealed, and addressed it.

Turning low the gas, he again descended toward the street.

In the rays of a lamp which dimly lit the stair-way at the second floor he came squarely upon a tall, gray-haired gentleman.

He was gazing, through his gold-rimmed eye-glasses, upon the walls in the hall-way.

As soon as he heard Bridger's footsteps he turned toward him.

"Well, Bobe, you are a fine duck," said he.

"So, so!" exclaimed Bridger, in surprise, and the two detectives clasped hands.

"Didn't you promise to communicate through the Pinkerton agency?"

"And this night, Fandon, I would have done so—but for the past three weeks I have been so—"

"Say nothing," interrupted the Scotch detective, perceiving that the landlady was intently listening near.

"Where are you going with the envelope?"

"To the post-office."

"I'll walk with you."

And the two detectives descended the stair-way.

"I've been hunting New York over for you, Bobe, for the past week," continued the Scotch detective as they turned in the dark street toward Broadway.

"And how came you to find my rooms?"

"Stumbled on them, of course. I had read so much years ago about the famous murder case that happened in that house, that, chancing past, I thought I would drop in and take a look at the surroundings."

"What famous murder case?"

"The case that transpired in the house where you are rooming."

"I never heard anything about it."

"What! never heard of the Burdell murder?"

"And do you want to say that the Burdell murder happened in the house we have just left?"

"Certainly, in the front corner on the second floor. The landlady but a moment since showed me the apartment."

"Well, that's news to me. I knew that it occurred on this street, but I had forgotten the number of the house. But that's neither here nor there. How about your own murder case? What did your 'spotting' amount to on the road? Did you find that girl? And what are you hanging out in New York, disguised as a good old parson, for?"

"To answer you somewhat in order, Bobe, Pinkerton's 'spotters' made out a 'dead' case against the conductors of the line. For a test Conductor Vandenger was indicted and tried for embezzlement. We clearly proved that on certain specified days he had taken from eighty dollars upward, which he had not turned into the company's treasury. His fellow conductors, knowing that his conviction or acquittal was equivalent to the same in their cases, clubbed together and employed a shrewd lawyer to defend him.

This lawyer appealed to the prejudice of the jury, already naturally strong against the railway company. Vandenger, he said, was a gentleman who had long resided in their midst. He had always paid his bills—owed no man a dollar. The first citizens of their city had intrusted to his care their journeying daughters and wives.

Against this gentleman's plea of 'not guilty' was arrayed the flimsy oaths of detectives, born and bred in metropolitan dens of crime. What did the jury think of any man who would spy upon another's actions for pay? If this honorable gentleman was convicted Pinkerton and his 'spotters' would be paid a large amount of money by the railway company. Should jail-birds' oaths swear an honest citizen to a felon's cell, and win this base gold? Or should good, honest John Vandenger breathe the honest air of Pennsylvania in freedom? The jury said that John should do so—and thus fell the company's case against its employees.

"Good enough for that," quoth Bridger. "For I must confess that I'm content the boys got off. And now, how about the girl?"

"She is an angel, Bobe."

"Then you found her?"

"Found her! I should say so! We are engaged to be married."

"Quick work! Then, I suppose, you have cleared up the Scotland Yard murder case?"

"Cleared it up as clear as day."

"And why then are you disguised?"

"I am hiding, Bobe, a fugitive from justice."

"A fugitive from justice?"

"Yes."

"On what charge?"

"Murder."

"Murder?"

"Yes, murder. But I am as innocent of the crime, Bobe, as you are of murdering those two men who sprang to their deaths at your touch."

"How did the deed occur?"

"In as mysterious a manner as the deaths of your passengers occurred. And now, Bobe, if you are my friend, I claim your aid. For never did a detective require the assistance of a brother sleuth-hound more than I require yours at this moment. Can I rely upon you?"

"Certainly. What's to be done?"

"The first thing to be done is to get hold of 'Silly' Billy, the garroter."

"Where is he?"

The two detectives had turned down Broadway on their way to the post-office.

The night was dark, a heavy fog hung over the city, rendering the street-lamps barely visible at a little distance, and few people were upon the streets.

Suddenly, and ere the Scotch detective could make answer, from a cross street near the St. Nicholas Hotel, sounded the cry:

"Murder! Help! Police!"

The two detectives hastened forward at all speed toward the scene of the disorder.

A foot-pad was in the act of robbing an elderly gentleman.

The powerful thief had pinned the old man's hands behind him in a vise-like clutch of his own left hand, and seizing his victim's throat in his brawny right, had bent his body helplessly backward.

A few moments sufficed to render the old man limp and insensible.

In an instant more the highwayman had secured his victim's pocket-book, and flinging the barely breathing body of the old man on the pavement turned to fly with his plunder.

As he did so the two detectives rushed upon him.

Bridger's hand clutched the burly villain's coat, when, as he turned about, the light from the street-lamp nearly fell upon his face.

The two detectives recognized him on the instant. It was 'Silly' Billy, the crazy giant of Millbank prison.

"Let him go! For God's sake, let him go!" said the Scotch detective, as the crazy garroter broke Bridger's hold and darted away, followed by a policeman who hastened by in the pursuit.

"Did you not a moment ago ask me to aid you in taking that thief? What do you mean?" demanded Bridger, excitedly, when the officer had passed from hearing.

"True, Bobe," returned Fandon, gently. "But it would spoil all if he fell into the hands of these blue coats and yellow buttons."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FOOT-PAD'S VICTIM.

The little tiger-like movement of 'Silly' Billy, as he darted away was in such contrast to the lazy though determined motion of the policeman, that the Scotch detective's action seemed to be equivalent to letting him go uncaught.

"The 'cop' has no more chance of overhauling the rogue than a cow behind a race-horse," quoth Fandon, glancing after the running men.

"Whether he has or not," returned Bridger, "I must fully understand your relations with the crazy giant ere I can render you the aid I promised."

"You don't doubt me, Bobe?"

"No, but I can always work to better advantage when I know what I'm driving at."

"You shall know all directly, Bobe. But first let us care for the rascal's victim. If possible, I would like to arrange that his complaint may not appear on the police blotter."

As he spoke the Scotch detective turned toward the insensible form of the ill-used old gentleman lying near.

The two detectives raised it gently and bore it beneath the street lamp.

The old man's hair was white as snow, and his features, bordered by closely trimmed gray whiskers, were tanned as if from long contact beneath a tropical sun.

His eyes were closed, his breathing was feeble and irregular, nor did he attempt to answer the questions asked him by the detectives.

"He's had a terrible handling," said the Scotch detective. "Let's take him to your rooms, Bobe—what say you?"

"What if he should die there?"

"I beg of you, Bobe, do as I ask. Have you liquor there?"

"Yes."

The two detectives lifted the insensible old man, and bearing him easily between them, hastened toward Bridger's Bond street rooms.

The throng of idlers which spring to existence at the slightest excitement in New York had on this occasion followed the fortunes of the pursuing policeman and fleeing highwayman.

Surging along at the heels of the officer, they rushed through Spring street, toward the Bowery, crying out, "Stop thief!" as they ran.

Those who perceived the detectives bearing along the insensible victim thought them friends taking home an inebriate, and passed them by with a glance.

Reaching the apartments, they placed their burden tenderly upon an easy-chair near the fire that blazed in the grate.

The journey had told severely on the injured old man.

He had apparently ceased to breathe, and, as the gaslight fell upon his pale features, it seemed that the detectives had a corpse on their hands.

Bridger hastily produced a bottle of brandy and placed it to the old man's lips.

As the liquor poured into his mouth he involuntarily swallowed it.

Its vivifying influence soon told, and the old man again breathed irregularly.

"He is saved!" said the Scotch detective. "And now sit we down, Bobe, and I will explain all, so that you will see we have acted for the best permitting 'Silly' Billy's escape.

"Up to some seventeen years ago," began Fandon, as the two detectives drew their chairs to the fire, "an old Frenchman lived upon the estate near London to which I followed Billy from Millbank prison. His name was Jean Godot; he was a miserable old miser, and had amassed a large fortune as a truck farmer. In his younger days he had married an English woman, who had borne him a son, whom they christened Alfonse. So meanly did the miser treat his wife and child that life became a burden to them,

and the mother died broken-hearted. The boy naturally despised his father as he grew to years of intelligence, and one day, becoming suddenly exasperated, accused him of causing his mother's death, and struck the old man down. He then fled to London, where he obtained employment as groom in a gentleman's stable.

"Jean Godot, for a time, dwelt alone in the large stone mansion, receiving his meals from the head-farmer's cottage near by. This man's name was Harvey Bolard, and it was he who banged the cottage door in my face when I had shadowed Billy thither.

"As the miser grew older he felt the need of some one to take care of his collections and accounts, and regretted the absence of his son for this reason.

"However, Harvey Bolard, the head farmer, found a young man who presented ample recommendations, and Jean Godot employed him at a low salary to do this work.

"The young man's name was Pere Videre, and by patiently studying to humor the old miser's whims he soon gained his confidence, so that Jean Godot was heard to publicly remark that he held his clerk in better regard than he had ever done his own son.

"Now, all the while this Harvey Bolard was no other than 'Iron' Mike Drugo, a notorious burglar who had for some years disappeared from his old haunts in London, and Pere Videre was 'Jack Drugo,' son of 'Iron' Mike, a shrewd pickpocket and sneak-thief known as the 'Squealer,' on account of his strange 'piccolo' voice.

"These persons had shaped their actions and altered their appearance to enable them to play, without discovery, the honest roles they seemed enacting as the miser's employees.

"Their real aim, as may be readily conjectured, was to put Jean Godot out of the way in a manner not to arouse suspicion, and to possess themselves of his wealth.

"Alfonse Godot, the miser's runaway son, had meanwhile become coachman to the gentleman who had employed him in London. His employer was a physician possessed of ample means, an Irishman, born in Dublin, and, as in the nature of his race, was hasty in temper. The man had been soured by an unhappy wedded life, and his house was kept secluded from society.

"Dr. Macy possessed but one relative in the world—a beautiful girl of nineteen, his daughter, and she was his idol and only joy.

"Alice Macy dearly loved her morose parent, but as a maiden buds to womanhood it is only natural that she

should consider her heart large enough to encompass the most ardent parental affection, and possess a surplus to be utilized elsewhere.

"Thrown into little company beyond the inmates of her father's establishment, Alice became attached to handsome Alfonse Godot.

"He confided to her the reason he had sought a home among strangers, and intimated that his father must die ere many years, and he fall heir to a rich inheritance.

"When the maiden learned that Alfonse was a rich man's son, driven from home, and by no means an ordinary coachman, the romance of the situation suited her girlish fancy so well that Alfonse and Alice became lovers sworn.

"By some accident Dr. Macy became aware that his daughter's feelings toward Alfonse were not consistent with those of a lady toward a coachman, and he dismissed Alfonse from his employ.

"But this did not end the matter. The lovers found methods of intercourse, and finally an elopement was planned, and they were married.

"A scandal followed, which so infuriated the testy old doctor that, changing his possessions to ready money, he departed from England, resolved to tear all love for his truant child from his heart, and to leave her to her fate.

"And my curse on the old brute for it!" interjected the Scotch detective, warmly. "I trust a good stiff hurricane hurried the ship he sailed in to the bottom of the ocean, and that the old scoundrel is there to this moment cooling his fiery brain, for, at all events, he has never been heard from since."

As Fandon spoke the old man seated in the easy-chair gave vent to a low moan.

The two detectives turned hastily toward him.

His eyes were wide open and staring toward them.

A moment later they closed, wearily, and the Scotch detective, remarking that "the old boy was coming about all right," resumed his story.

CHAPTER XI.

"I THANK GOD I WAS ROBBED."

"For some eighteen months the newly wedded pair lived happily together," continued the Scotch detective. "By that time their small means had vanished, and, thinking

that Dr. Macy's wrath had ample opportunity to spend itself, they resolved to approach him and plead for forgiveness.

"They returned to find their former home occupied by strangers, who did not even know the gentleman they sought.

"The unhappy bride implored her young husband, for the sake of the tender babe she bore in her arms, to appeal to his father, Jean Godot.

"Alfonse wrote to his father, begging forgiveness for the past and asking that a small remittance be sent him to ease his present poverty.

"The letter was not answered, and only served to hasten the gloomy fate which had marked the devoted pair for its own.

"Starvation, or the workhouse, threatened the fated lovers.

"One day as Alfonse, with bleeding heart, looked about for some employment to earn bread for his starving wife, he met a man who spoke kindly to him, but who was no other than Pere Videre, the 'Squealer.'

"He offered to procure Alfonse a situation, and enticed him into a liquor store to partake of a social glass.

"The liquor was drugged, and when poor Alfonse awoke to consciousness he found himself out at sea in the fore-castle of an East India bound ship. He had been 'shanghaied' on board at the docks, and shipped as a common sailor. "Pere Videre had used 'Silly' Billy as his assistant in thus doing away with Alfonse Godot, and afterward Billy was given a home in the Bolard cottage.

"Bolard and Videre well knew the crazy thief's temperament, and that so long as he was well fed and kindly treated he would remain quietly at work on the estate, while if permitted to tarry in London he might 'give away' the enforced shipment of the miser's son.

"The twain had also stronger reasons for offering Billy a home.

"In spite of them, however, he would at times take offense at Bolard's rough ways, and returning to London, go at his old tricks.

"It was during one of these excursions that I arrested him for garroting an old sea captain, for which offense he was flogged when you were in London, Bobe."

"In the meantime what became of Alice Godot and her babe?" asked Bridger, evidently much interested.

"The wretched young woman," continued the Scotch de-

detective, "wandered for days helplessly and starving in the streets of London, sleeping at night in the parks, and fearing that to crown all her woes her young husband had deserted her.

"Love for the babe at her breast alone prevented the wretched creature from welcoming the death that seemed imminent.

"Thinking that Alfonse had gone to seek his father, she set out on foot, weak, starving, and sick, bearing her babe, and inquiring her way to the Godot estate.

"One night, as the Bolards sat at their evening meal, a feeble tap came upon their door. Meg Bolard hastened to open it. Alice Godot, sore-footed, worn out, starving, dying, fell across the threshold, clasping her babe to her breast.

"Bolard, muttering a curse upon the hapless intruder, seized her roughly, and lifted her to her feet.

"'Is this the estate of Jean Godot?' she gasped.

"'And what if it be?' growled Bolard.

"'I—I am Alfonse Godot's wife, and this babe is Annette Godot, his—his—'

"She spoke no more—nor did she ever speak again.

"Bolard would have hurled her limp form forth into the highway, and left the babe to perish as well, had not Meg, his wife, with flashing eyes, championed the cause of the poor creature dead in her brutal husband's arms.

"'Moind what you be doin', "Iron" Mike Drugo!' she said. 'For, by the howly powers, if ye trate the poor dead thing with aven disrespect, I'll off to the "beak," and give up both you and yer "racket"—yis, will I do't, if I be "twisted" for't! For shame, you ugly old brute! Haven't ye been tellin' me the son married an Irish gintleman's daughter, and do you think an Irish lady would see the loikes of ye, Drugo, mistrate the poor crather's bones till they be laid dacently away in the grave?'

"'But the brat—the brat!' snarled Bolard, glancing upon the sleeping babe clasped in the dead woman's arms. 'If it lives, where is the use of the 'racket,' Meg—the plan that's to make you a rich lady and me a rich man?'

"'There's no necissity for any one knowing av who the woman or her child is, Mike. Take her, do you hear me, and lay her insoide on me bed. Thin off wid ye in dacence and notify the poor-master that a poor, starving beggar-woman doied at yer house afore ye could aven give her aid.'

"'And what shall I say of the brat, Meg?'

"'It's a wee Irish darlint—so it is, and ye nade not mention it at all.'

"As Meg spoke she took the babe into her arms, and kissed it fondly. It opened its blue eyes, and seeing a strange face, began to cry.

"'Ma—ma—mamma!' the little waif prattled amid its tears.

"Meg kissed it, fondled it, danced it, talked baby talk to it, and soon had it smiling in baby glee.

"'Yis, ma—ma—mamma it is for ye, me dear little darlint!' she said. 'If ye've lost one mamma ye've found another in Meg Bolard. And I'm goin' to raise the little one for me own, Mike Drugo, and smoke that in your poipe, will you!'

"'Do what you will, and be —— to you, for you'll do it anyhow,' muttered Bolard, with a curse, and he bore the form of the dead girl within, as Meg had directed, and placed it upon the bed.

"The poor-master's men removed the corpse and buried it, and a week later it was rumored about that Mrs. Margaret Bolard had presented her surly husband with an infant daughter.

"Not many months afterward Jean Godot was one day found dead in his room in the stone mansion. It was reported and currently believed that he had been in the act of shaving himself, when in a sudden fit of melancholy he had cut his throat. The position of the body when found, and the bloody razor still grasped in the dead man's hand, pointed to suicide.

"Upon a table near the body was found a letter addressed "To all concerned," and which read as follows:

"'I, Jean Godot, of sound mind, say that I have grown weary of life since my wife died, and my son deserted his home.

"'Whatever should happen me, and being at this moment better disposed to die than to live, I pen these lines as my will:

"'I command that my death be published publicly, and that if my son, Alfonse Godot, appears and proves that he is my son during twenty years subsequent to my death, that all my property, real and personal, shall be his to keep and use forever.

"'I command further that until my son, Alfonse Godot, appears to claim my behest, Pere Videre, my son by adoption, shall hold and control my estate as my executor, and shall possess, in his own right, all revenues therefrom.

"'And I further command that should my son, Alfonse Godot, fail to appear within the twenty years named, that at the end of that time all my estate above mentioned shall become the property of Pere Videre, my son by adoption, to hold and keep forever.'

"This document was dated in due form, and was written and signed in Jean Godot's scrawling hand.

"Its terms and conditions were cunningly arranged and natural, and when it was offered in the courts for probate as the miser's will, an order of citation was granted, and the Godot estate fell into the hands of Videre and Bolard.

"Bolard still remained upon the estate in his position of head farmer, while Videre spent his time playing the gentleman in London, and upon the Continent.

"So well, indeed, did 'Iron' Mike and his worthy son work their deep game, and use the great wealth that fell from it to them afterward, that as the years rolled by not a breath of suspicion was uttered by any one against them.

"And thus stood matters when the dream of the crazy garroter and the beautiful girl wading in a rivulet of blood on which seemed floating the many gold coins, became a nightly visitor to my pillow, and when I shadowed Billy from Millbank prison to meet Annette, Alice Godot's child, in the beautiful girl at the door of the cottage.

"On that day when I showed my badge to the girl at the up-stairs window, keen eyes were watching me from the edge of the curtains in a window below. And thus it came that we found the cottage empty when we made the descent upon it, and that I have followed these people here."

"And what have you done here?" asked Bridger.

"I have found proof that Jean Godot was murdered by Harvey Bolard, alias 'Iron' Mike Drugo, and that Pere Videre, alias 'Jack' Drugo, was his confederate in the crime."

"And where are these people now?"

"Pere Videre is in England enjoying the Godot estate, but held under the eye of Scotland Yard until I can find positive proofs warranting his arrest. Bolard is dead and in his grave, and Annette, Meg, and 'Silly' Billy are secluded in some den in this great city, 'Silly' Billy supporting them by his thefts."

The Scotch detective took the locket containing the miniatures of Alfonse and Alice Godot from his pocket as he spoke, and presenting it for Bridger's inspection, added:

"And now, friend Bobe, since I have shown you my reason for permitting the crazy giant's escape to-night, may I claim your assistance in the rescue of this innocent girl from the haunts of thieves?"

"As matters stand," returned Bridger, "it is certainly for the best that no charge be made against Billy for the

robbery of this old man, and you can rely upon me to aid you in the rescue of the girl."

"And as matters stand, I thank God I was robbed this night by the thief you call Billy."

Had it been a voice from the grave the two detectives could not have been more startled.

The old man had arisen from the easy-chair, and stood peering over Bridger's shoulder upon the miniature of Alice Godot.

Overcome by his emotions, and still very weak, he fell back upon the chair, and added, in a hoarse whisper, as the tears coursed down his wan cheeks:

"I am the Dr. Macy of whom you have spoken."

CHAPTER X.

THE FAIR SMUGGLER.

"Doctor Macy who dwelt in London?" exclaimed the Scotch detective, excitedly, bounding to his feet.

"Ay," gasped the old man, "the foolish, headstrong, criminal father, who left poor Alice to die a beggar and outcast.

"Tell me," he added, leaning eagerly forward, "might it be possible that Alice yet lives—that she did not die in want, as you have said?"

"No, no; she is dead, and died at the Bolard cottage."

"And was buried where?"

"In the poor-field."

"Great Heaven! Are you sure of that?"

"Certainly. I have followed all these clews in England."

"Tell me can her grave be found?"

"Readily; its number is 1,248."

"1,248! Great Heaven! I, wretched man, am her murderer! But at least, at least I may give her decent burial."

And wringing his hands in agony, the old man fell back upon his chair, weeping bitter tears.

"Come, my man, this will not do," said the Scotch detective, pouring forth and proffering a drink of brandy.

"The past is past, and let it be so; there is much that may be done to atone for it in the future."

"Ay," responded Dr. Macy, draining the glass and brightening up. "Annette, my daughter's child, lives, and then, too, Annette's father, Alfonse, still lives."

"Alfonse Godot still lives?" echoed the Scotch detective, in surprise.

"As surely as that my poor Alice is dead."

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes; have been in his company for months, and his story agrees with yours, that he was kidnapped to sea. By the way, sir, what is your name and occupation?"

"My name, sir, is Roland Fandon, detective of Scotland Yard, detailed to America to find Harvey Bolard, Meg, his wife, 'Silly' Billy, and Annette, and clear up the Godot murder case."

"Then it was of you the inspector in London spoke to me a fortnight since?"

"I dare say."

"He informed me that Annette was in America, and bade me communicate with you through the British Minister at Washington. But oh, I have been always fortunate in misfortune, even as I have been misfortunate when fortune seemed smiling fairest on me. My sole aim in life is now wrapped in the well-being of the child Annette. Not receiving an answer as I expected from you at Washington, I became nervous. In every pretty face I passed upon the street I fancied I saw a resemblance to my dear dead daughter. It was following a pretty maiden, who glanced smilingly toward me, that led me to walk from the steps of the hotel to the cross street where I was robbed. Might it be that Annette has been trained to decoy men thus into the clutches of 'Silly' Billy?"

"No, for she is as pure as an angel."

"Then these coarse people have not dragged her to a level in their sin?"

"That they have not."

"Thank Heaven! But you said that she is at this moment dwelling in this city among thieves. I pray you make haste and tell me the circumstances that have brought her to this plight?"

The Scotch detective glanced toward Bridger, and the two detectives placed their chairs that they might face the old doctor.

"Make haste, I beg of you," he continued, impatiently, perceiving that the Scotch detective paused, as if determining in his mind whether it would best suit his ends to proceed with his tale.

"I rest easy, you perceive," said the old man, "and will be much stronger as soon as the doubts and uncertainties that perplex my brain may change into a definite hope that

I may meet Annette, and behold her mother's features pictured on a living body. Deny me not, therefore, aught that you know concerning her, Detective Fandon, for I am rich, and will add sums that you have not dreamed of to the reward that shall be yours if you aid me to tear remorse from my heart for the past, and to possess the care of the living."

"The gold coins of the dream begin to float, you perceive," said the Scotch detective aside to Bridger.

"Listen, then," he added, aloud, addressing the doctor, "and I will tell you of such meetings as I have had with Annette."

"Meetings! Then you have met her?"

"Yes, that I have, doctor, and right here I may state frankly that you are likely to have another case of love on your hands which you may not approve."

"You don't mean, sir, that you and the girl are lovers?"

"That is precisely what I mean."

"What! An aged man like you in love with a young girl!"

"I am but seven years older than Annette," returned the Scotch detective pulling the wig from his shapely head, and exposing his own glossy black hair.

The old doctor started in surprise at the detective's speedy transformation from old age to youth, and Fandon continued:

You understand, doctor, detectives are forced to assume many characters, and play many roles in the way of business. They have even found it requisite to make love to girls and women to obtain desired secrets."

"And you mean to say that you have thus played upon Annette's affections, sir?"

"I certainly did succeed in winning her affections in a purely professional manner, but she was so winning, so good, so beautiful, so different from all other maidens that I had met that I soon found myself drifting far beyond my professional balance and original intention. She is now my affianced wife, and I have followed to her rescue here under an accusation of murder, whereas I might stalk forth erect did I not regard her welfare as above my reputation as a detective. But if you do not interrupt me further I will go on with my story.

"Some while after the day, Bohe, we beheld that bright face peer from the car window as we stood by the switch, I learned from one of the 'spotters' under my charge that on several occasions he had noticed a neat, tidy, heavily

veiled little lady get off the train at the busy town of Corydon. By his description I did not doubt it was Annette. I instructed him, did he observe her again, to follow her and find out where she went. A week later he informed me that he had seen her again, and had found that she had entered a music teacher's dwelling, whither she came weekly to take lessons upon the piano.

"Now it so happens that I play well upon the piano myself, and possess also the mechanical skill to tune pianos.

"So, soon as my duties ended upon the railway, I repaired to Corydon, and took rooms at the best hotel in the role of music agent and piano-tuner.

"My entire appearance and manner were much more those of a gay deceiver, I will admit, than of a poorly paid dabbler in music.

"I had provided myself with an armful of new music, the tools needed for tuning purposes, and had succeeded in obtaining the right to sell for several piano and music firms.

"I was cautious about entering the dwelling where Annette (for it proved to be she) received instruction.

"I made many attempts to sell elsewhere, and some respectable sales, ere I ventured to do so.

"Meanwhile I learned that the teacher was Mrs. Bibby, a young and fascinating widow, and that she had heard that I was about.

"At length I called upon her in the way of business.

"As a rule, I have always been well received by the ladies, and got along remarkably well with the widow, who was a sprightly little woman, plump in form, possessed of snappish brown eyes, and a wealth of red hair.

"In fact, after an hour's stay I left the fair lady's door on almost as good terms as if I had known her for years, and received a very pressing invitation to call again.

"During several subsequent visits our acquaintanceship rapidly ripened, and, in truth, I soon knew pretty nearly everything the fair widow did.

"I did not question her regarding Annette, but permitted her to first refer to her in her description of her several pupils.

"'She is a pretty, blue-eyed girl about whom there seems a mystery,' she one day remarked, meaning Annette. 'Her father and mother are coarse, but wealthy, they say, and dwell at Garson, a small station twelve miles eastward. They are new-comers, and keep a hotel and livery stable, and have purchased a number of farms near by.'

"‘I have seen the young lady on the train several times,’ I ventured to remark. ‘She seems to be perpetually under vail, and very shy of strangers, is she not?’

"‘Yes, poor thing,’ said the widow. ‘She is very shy of strangers for some reason. In fact, at her own request, I have appointed the time for her instruction, so that she may meet no one here but myself. Some folks are that way, you know.’

"‘So she calls for her lesson on one particular day each week?’ I asked.

"Mrs. Bibby colored just a trifle, and looked as if she did not wholly approve the interest I took in her fair pupil.

"I was also impressed by her manner that she was about to tell me a huge fib.

"‘It is really impossible to say, Mr. Josalyn’ (that was my name in Corydon), ‘when Miss Annette may call, or, indeed, if she will call any more at all. Her quarter was up yesterday. She plays quite well, and she said that her father might possibly permit her to take no more lessons.’

"I felt assured that this was untrue, and, fearing that the evidently jealous lady might inform Annette at her next coming that she could give her no further instruction, I changed the subject of conversation, and endeavored, by every gallantry possible, to impress upon the lively widow that she alone of all her sex possessed my thoughts.

"Mrs. Bibby now became very communicative. She intimated that she considered me a very successful agent and piano-tuner to keep up my style and dwell at the best hotel—perhaps I had some other business as well.

"I assured her to the contrary, and remarked that her finely furnished and cozy home spoke well of her success in the line of teaching.

"‘And I own the furniture, and house, and everything, too,’ she said. ‘Nor is that all.’

"And she took a bank-note from a writing-desk in the corner of the parlor, and showed me that several thousand dollars were accredited to her in the bank.

"When I expressed delight that her abilities as a musical instructor had been so well appreciated by the good people of Corydon, she glanced at me with a roguish twinkle in her bright eyes, and said:

"‘Fudge! do you think I drummed all that out of piano-keys?’

"I suggested that the late Mr. B. had been a most excellent and prudent husband if, on departing from this

earth, he had left his charming widow in such comfortable circumstances.

“‘Alas! your conjecture is again wrong, Mr. Josalyn,’ quoth the fair widow, with a sigh. ‘My late husband was good and kind to me, but very shiftless, and left me not a dollar. Ah, me! Mr. B. was not the kind of man I might have loved with my whole soul, nor should have wed. But giddy young girls do some foolish things. Ah, me! ah, me!’

“Then suddenly brightening up, and poising her head coquettishly aside, she continued:

“‘No, no, Mr. Josalyn—the truth is I have a secret business which has gained me all.’

“She then became very confidential, and explained that her brother was the chief-engineer on a Havana steamship. (I had heard at the hotel that he was an oiler on one of the lines, but it was no fault of his sister that he was not higher in rank, and perhaps she was mistaken.) He, however, smuggled large lots of the finest cigars every trip. The captain, mates, and all hands were joined in the trade, and the ship always arrived off the heads, at Sandy Hook, during the night. Just before the ship came to anchor at quarantine the huge bales of cigars, tied in sea-proof sacks and rubber cloths, were hurled overboard, and a waiting boat in the ship’s wake picked them up. The men in the boat conveyed them ashore, and thence to their rendezvous in New York. Here her brother boxed his share and forwarded them to her in Corydon, and in the oil regions and in the towns she rapidly disposed of them at great profit to friends. One-third of the net gain she pocketed herself, and the remaining money she inclosed to her brother. Why, she even furnished the hotel in which I stopped with cigars.

“Having given me these points, possibly to impress upon my mind that she was a splendid ‘catch’ for a traveling young man, she suggested that if I desired to store any of the pianos I was selling I could do so at her home.

“In fact, the fair widow did everything but propose outright to marry me, and set me going.

“The year not being leap-year perhaps prevented this, but certainly never did a neat, lively, lovable little woman become so completely smitten with a fellow at such short acquaintance, I think.

“And all the while, base man, I was revolving in my mind a plan to outwit her and meet Annette.

"Having resolved what I would do, I departed from the fair widow's abode with a foul lie upon my lips.

"'I am bidding you adieu, Jennie' (I called her Jennie now), 'for a whole week, I am sad to say. Business calls me to Buffalo, and I leave upon the train to-night. But of one thing rest assured—I will provide myself with a pocket full of those cigars at the hotel, and, when I am far away, every whiff of their fragrant smoke shall remind me of the charming smuggler to whom I am indebted for them.'

"'And you will call around when you return, Sam?'

"She called me Sam now.

"'Will I? Just as soon as I strike Corydon, if not sooner.'

"'Now, don't forget.'

"'Ah, Jennie, where the sugar is the poor fly must come. By-by.'

"And I walked away."

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE AND MUSIC.

"Tom Bowling, the clerk of the hotel in Corydon, continued the Scotch detective, "was a jovial, good-hearted, sensible fellow.

"The truth is, he was in love with the Widow Bibby himself.

"One of the proprietors of the hotel firm had recently died, and Tom required several thousand in cash to buy in —, but it would be base to say that his love for the fair widow did not go further, for it did.

"Tom was very well informed regarding the widow's affairs, and was positive that on the very next day Annette's weekly music lesson transpired.

"He knew very well that my advent in Corydon had made a decided impression on Mrs. Bibby, but he was not in the least jealous.

"He knew what I was after, and realized that so soon as I had departed from Corydon the fair widow would collapse and fall upon his manly breast for consolation.

"That night I failed to start for Buffalo, and next day, when the two P. M. train was due from Garson, I stood aside in the Corydon station-house in a position to observe the arrivals.

"The train glided in on time, and I had the satisfaction

of seeing the graceful form of the little maiden I longed to meet descend to the platform from the ladies' car steps.

"Looking neither right nor left, she emerged from the throng of passengers and hastened past the depot to the near by-street.

"An hour later I sauntered by the widow's home, and heard those peculiar noises which unmistakably denote that a young lady is receiving a lesson upon the piano.

"The evening previous I had received from a New York publishing house a new and popular plantation melody, and to the amusement of those in the ladies' parlor at the hotel, I had sung and played it over until I could render it very creditably.

"Without ceremony I bounced into the hall way, and opened the door of the widow's parlor directly upon the sprightly lady and her fair pupil.

"Never in my life did I behold so fair a sight.

"It seemed to me as the bright blue eyes of Annette Godot turned toward me in a bewildered stare—so much fairer than all womankind did she appear to me, that I should not have been more astonished had I beheld seated at the piano a veritable angel, angel-clad, wings and all.

"Perceiving that she turned shyly from my glance with a look and manner as wild as that of the forest fawn, I bowed, with assumed composure, to the widow.

"She had arisen to her feet.

"And I may say, from her terrified and angry appearance, she would not have been more astounded nor chagrined if the chief of all that's bad from his fiery home in sulphur flame, had as suddenly entered her presence.

"'Why, Sam—that is, Mr. Josalyn,' she almost shrieked, 'I thought you had gone last night to Buffalo for a week.'

"'I missed the train, I am sorry—that is, glad—to say,' I replied. 'And receiving last night a new song which all New York is singing, I could not resist the temptation to bring it to you at once. But I trust I do not interfere with your piano exercise? I sincerely beg the young lady's pardon and yours if I have intruded.'

"'Oh, not at all; so glad you've come,' quoth the widow, and being in politeness bound to introduce her fair pupil, she added:

"'Miss Bolard, this is Mr. Josalyn, a friend of mine, who is acting in Corydon as agent for pianos, music, and musical instruments.'

"I feared from the glance she had bestowed upon me that day at the switch that the little beauty would recog-

nize in me the tramp detective of the Bolard cottage in England.

"But she did not seem to do so.

"She arose, blushing and excited, and bowed to me in acknowledgment.

"My feelings, as I read her pure heart beaming like a priceless mine of gold through her beautiful eyes, I cannot describe.

"I was charmed.

"Here was a young lady as pure of thought and life as the snow-drop on the mountain top, and one who had met so few gentlemen that she seemed actually embarrassed at the introduction.

"Dear creature! she doubtless thought that to me, a brusque fellow of the world, she seemed awkward, while, in reality, she appeared to me not only as pretty, but prettier than any picture I had ever beheld—on canvas or alive.

"I knew that ere I might become acquainted with her I must make her perfectly at ease in my presence, and I proceeded to work at once.

"‘Now, ladies,’ said I, ‘overlook my rudeness, for I am full of music, and you must hear this new melody.’

"Drawing two easy-chairs near the piano, I grasped the widow and sat her down on one, and then placed Annette gently upon the other—not, indeed, as if I were a new acquaintance, but as if the ladies had been my sisters.

"I performed this delicate feat in so polite, albeit assured a manner that, far from being offended, both laughed merrily at my boldness and enthusiasm.

"I noticed, however, that the widow's laughter died down much sooner than the musical mirth of Annette.

"Planting myself at the piano, I spread forth the music, and played the air over with a touch that astonished the fair widow.

"‘Why, Sam—that is, Mr. Josalyn—you are quite a performer!’ she exclaimed as I finished. ‘I never heard you play so before. Surely the surroundings to day are very agreeable, that your heart is so equal to the task?’

"‘My heart is in music to-day, surely,’ I said, turning toward the widow, ‘and as I have brought the air here expressly for you to hear, it is only natural that you would pardon, even flatter the execution. But hearken to me now, for I am about to sing.’

"‘And if ever mortal sang well,’ I added, turning to

blushing Annette on my left, 'he should do so before the audience that I have.'

"Then I sang, and if ever I did sing well (and I do warble passably), I did so then.

"When I had ended I turned toward the ladies.

"The widow said that I had played and sung well, but she did not fancy plantation melodies.

"'And what do you think of the song, Miss Annette?' I asked.

"'Oh, it is very, very pretty,' she said, smiling sweetly, and I perceived that she was well over her embarrassment.

"'Then as you like the air, and Mrs. Bibby doesn't, permit me to present it to you,' and I presented the music to Annette.

"She took it in her little hand, and thanked me, saying that she would surely learn to play it.

"I perceived, however, that the widow's eyes glared viciously upon her fair pupil, and to divert the ladies I turned again to the piano and sang several English songs in which I was well up.

"Annette seemed delighted, but somehow the widow's smiles became staler and staler.

"To end the entertainment I took the music sheet from Annette's hand, and calling the ladies' attention to a comic ditty which was tacked upon the back of the sheet, I asked them to pass their opinions upon it.

"It was a foolish thing, and ran in the chorus something like this:

"'Pretty little Sarah, with the golden hair
Her beauty jealous maidens will be scorning;
She'd ought to've been an angel,
If only rich I were
I'd marry her so early in the morning.'

"As I ended the ditty charming Annette was wreathed in smiles and lovely in blushes, while the expression on the widow's face was not, to say the least, pleasant.

"'Why, my dear Jennie—that is, Mrs. Bibby,' said I, 'I fear that I have displeased you. What a thoughtless fellow I am, to be sure, taking the time allotted by appointment and due Miss Annette as the pupil and you as the teacher.'

"'It is not that that gives me anxiety,' returned the widow. 'Nor do I desire to interrupt your singing, which seems to please Miss Bolard so well, although she has now

barely time in which to catch the six o'clock train for home.'

"I glanced at the clock, and sure enough it lacked but a few minutes to six.

"Bless me! I would not for the world have caused Miss Annette this trouble,' I exclaimed, springing to my feet and hastening to the window.

"'And, dear me, it is raining!' (A fact, by the way, of which I had been aware for some time, and was prepared for.)

"'But fortunately I have my umbrella with me, and I will do what I can to atone for my faults by shielding Miss Annette from the rain to the station.

"'Oh, thank you!' said Annette, as she hastily tied on a hat which upon any other head would certainly have seemed ugly.

"But from under the hideous affair the little beauty's bright face beamed fairer to me than ever, and as she darted up to Mrs. Bibby and gave her a good-by kiss, I certainly envied the widow.

"Mrs. Bibby followed us to the door, and being anxious that Annette should arrive at the depot in time, advised us to hurry.

"As I lifted my umbrella, that canopy of delight under circumstances, drew Annette's arm under my own, and stepped briskly away with her, I thought that the widow's door banged shut somewhat lively; but there was a stiff storm blowing, and a sudden draft possibly hastened the door's movements.

"Alone with Annette, I must admit, I used every endeavor to steal away the little maiden's heart.

"In the widow's presence I had never felt otherwise than as an actor playing a part, but with Annette it was from the first a genuine case of love—of love on sight as well.

"Swiftly I hurried the little beauty along the wet street, and where streams gushed by at the crossings I grasped her tender form and sprang nimbly over with the gentle burden.

"At six we arrived at the station to find that the train was ten minutes late.

"I pulled from my pocket a roll of bills, and desired to procure her a ticket, but she informed me that she was furnished with a twenty-six-trip ticket, a form in use on the road for frequent journeyers.

"I took forth my elegant gold watch, the gift of friends in London, to compare time.

"I stood in the depot so that the light which the ticket-agent had lit in his window shone full upon the diamond in my shirt bosom, and on the ring I wear.

"I did everything, in fact, that a man might do under the circumstances to create an impression.

"And I succeeded.

"At length the train, all too soon, thundered into the station.

"'Here now is the train, Miss Annette, and we must part,' I said.

"'Oh, I am so sorry,' she replied, with charming innocence.

"'But I know we will meet again at Mrs. Bibby's. It is this day week you take your lessons, is it not?'

"'Yes, every Friday is my day,' she said.

"'And you must tell your papa, Miss Annette, that if he wishes your organ tuned up, and you say several of the keys are broken, or if he desires to purchase the piano you say he has promised you, I will surely serve you cheaper than any one else.'

"'I will tell him.'

"'Here is my card, Miss Annette. And now good-by.'

"As I spoke I handed her safely up the car-steps, and she tripped into the car.

"The train departed and left me alone.

"In fact I never felt more lonely in my life than I did for the next hour.

"For the first I felt the force of the fierce wind and rain-storm that swirled about, and it seemed as if I had been suddenly hurled forth from fairy-land into a bleak and howling wilderness.

"I hastened to the hotel, ate a hasty meal, and sat in the office for an hour, smoking one of the widow's 'weeds,' silently and in a dream.

"From this I was awakened by jolly Tom Bowling, the clerk, who, slapping me familiarly on the shoulder, said:

"'Why, Sam, old boy, what's the matter with you? Where now be the gibes with which you made the table roar? Answer me, man, is it the stormy night, or have you been to a funeral?'

"'Tom,' I returned, 'I have just been looking through myself to see if I was not head over heels in love with an angel on the earth.'

"At this slight provocation this jovial fellow roared in laughter.

"At that moment, greatly to my surprise, the sprightly

widow, accompanied by several ladies of the house, passed through the hall-way toward the parlor.

"Hearing Tom's laughter they paused, and the landlady playfully bade the young man, who was her brother, not to harm himself.

"'I've just been asking Sam how his heart was,' he responded.

"'And how is it?' quoth the widow.

"'Mrs. Bibby,' said I, 'you should know the condition of every article which you possess yourself.'

"At this bit of gallantry the ladies laughed merrily, and disappeared, but I have since learned that such 'bits of gallantry' may become formidable things if bestowed in public upon sprightly widows.

"I have narrated thus minutely my first meeting with Annette, doctor," said the Scotch detective, "because I love to recall it, and to show you how charming a little lady she is."

"My poor, dear grandchild," sighed Dr. Macy, "that she should this night be lodging among thieves."

CHAPTER XII.

ANNETTE'S DREAM.

"And now, doctor," said the Scotch detective, "as my tale will soon drift to a part which may prove unpleasant to your ears, you must take a swallow more of the brandy to nerve you for the recital."

Dr. Macy swallowed the proffered brandy, and the Scotch detective continued his narrative.

"While waiting that the week might pass and bring Annette's next music day," said he, "I frequently visited Mrs. Bibby.

"I could plainly see that she was fearful and jealous of Annette.

"I felt assured that she had determined to dismiss her fair pupil so soon as she again visited her home.

"I laid my plans accordingly.

"I busied myself during the week in the role of agent, but the time passed very slowly.

"Several times I was tempted to take the train for Garson.

"Had I acted solely from promptings regarding my duty as a detective, I should have lost no time in doing so.

"But the matter had assumed a phase which required delicate treatment.

"At length the day dawned, for which I had so patiently waited.

"A circus and menagerie was billed to exhibit in the town, and the streets were filled with people who flocked from the surrounding country to behold the parade of the elephant, and the wonders to transpire in the tented field.

"Every train arrived laden with excursionists, and I felt some concern lest the crowded state of travel might prevent Annette's coming.

"The two P. M. train from Garson rolled into Corydon filled with people.

"I carefully scanned the throngs of passengers as they left the train, and my heart leaped in glad anticipation as I perceived, among the last to leave the cars, the maiden I had waited to see.

"My little beauty had been going in for adornment.

"She wore a dress of purple silk, a gold necklace, and, perched over all, the same ugly hat, and heavy veil.

"I flattered myself that the purple silk was on my special account.

"She paused, too, when she stepped on the platform, and looked about her as if she had expected some one in waiting to meet her.

"Assuring herself that no one was on hand to bid her welcome, she hastened away toward the widow's door.

"Chatting the while with the youth behind the counter, I waited to learn the truth or fallacy of my conjecture as to Annette's reception.

"I had not long to wait.

"Barely had I smoked a dozen whiffs of my newly fired cigar when the door opened, and Annette came briskly forth.

"She appeared excited and in tears, and paused upon the steps to wipe her eyes.

"She then hastened up the street, as if on her way back to the depot.

"As she did so a window blind in the widow's parlor was pulled aside, and the widow herself, gayly arrayed, with white roses in her red hair, peered after the little maiden with a self satisfied smirk on her fair features.

"When Annette had passed aside from the range of the window the blind dropped to its place.

"The little beauty passed directly by the corner where I stood, and down the cross street toward the station.

"I stepped from a side door and followed her.

"Ha, ha! Miss Annette; playing truant from your music lesson, I perceive,' I sang out, gayly, as I approached her side.

"She paused, and drew aside her veil. Her eyes were red, and on the long lashes hung tell-tale tear-drops.

"Oh, I'm so delighted to see you!' she exclaimed, with a start, and extending her little gloved hand. 'But Mrs. Bibby is waiting your coming, and I must not detain you.'

"I see no reason why she should be,' I replied. 'Did she not give you your lessons?'

"No; she—that is—I am quite sure she said she was waiting your coming, and that you were going to the circus together.'

"Believe me, Annette, she has no promise of mine to warrant her thinking so. She did ask me to accompany her to the circus, but I replied that that would interfere with your lesson. She then assured me that you would not come to-day. But I believed that you would come, for all that, and have been watching and waiting until you had done your lesson, that I might invite you to accompany me to the show.'

"A startled expression came into the little beauty's eyes, and she tapped her little foot upon the pavement, and looked at it.

"It is very strange,' she said. 'Mrs. Bibby is confident that you are coming, and said she must be excused from giving my lesson to-day, and that she would be unable to give any further instruction as she was engaged to be married to you.'

"She has no right to say this,' said I. 'The fact is, I only cultivated her acquaintance that I might form yours, for I had seen you on the trains, and though ardently desiring to know you, felt that I could only do so agreeably to yourself in the way of a proper introduction.'

"Then you do not love Mrs. Bibby, and are not engaged to marry her?' she asked, her eyes beaming with innocent pleasure.

"Believe me, Annette, I never dreamed of such a thing before I met you, and certainly not after. The fact is, I have never loved any woman in the world, and as for getting married, I vow that if I ever do that, it will be with the consent of some little lady about your size.'

"My consent?'

"Yes, your consent, and provided the bride has hair like yours, has blue eyes, wears a blue traveling dress

sometimes and sometimes a purple silk, likes to hear plantation melodies, and—”

“‘Me! do you mean me?’

“‘Yes, Annette; I mean you. I love you.’

“‘And I loved you the first time I saw you,’ she exclaimed.

“‘I caught the innocent little beauty to my breast, right there and then upon the street, and kissed her fondly.

“‘Oh, I am so happy!’ she exclaimed, as I released her from my embrace, her blue eyes fairly dancing in delight.

“‘And when shall we be married?’

“‘I would say in ten minutes if I could, Annette,’ I replied. ‘But come, take my arm, and we’ll walk to the show and talk the matter over.’

“‘You see,’ I continued, as we turned toward the show grounds, ‘the first point is to obtain your parents’ consent.’

“‘Yes,’ she responded, reflectively. ‘You will go with me on the train to-night to repair our organ, won’t you?’

“‘I will, Annette.’

“‘Oh, I will be so happy to have you come!’

“‘You live at Garson, don’t you?’

“‘Yes.’

“‘Your father keeps a hotel there, doesn’t he?’

“‘Mr. Bolard does, but he is not my father.’

“‘Not your father!’

“‘No, Roe Fandon. You know he is not.’

“‘I never was more astonished in my life. I had often heard said that we don’t give the girls credit for knowing half as much as they do, but how innocent Annette should know that I was Roe Fandon puzzled me.

“‘Why, whom do you think I am, Annette?’

“‘She looked at me a moment archly, and said:

“‘We are to be married, are we not?’

“‘Yes.’

“‘Well, then, there should be no secrets between us, should there?’

“‘No.’

“‘Then I do not think—I know that you are Roe Fandon, a Scotland Yard detective, come to find my true papa and mamma for me.’

“‘How do you know this, Annette?’

“‘Why, the day you were dressed in tramp’s clothes, followed ‘Silly’ Billy from prison in London, asked me for a glass of water, Bolard pushed me back from the door before I could give you a glass of milk; I signaled to you

from the up-stairs window of the cottage in England—do you mind that?

"I nodded assent, smiling as I did so, for the little maiden's spirits ran high, and her enunciation was swift enough to do credit to a 'gal down Maine.'

"'Well,' she continued, 'when you showed me your badge 'Mam' Meg Bolard, and 'Silly' Billy were peeping at you from the window down stairs, and I heard 'Silly' Billy say, that you were Roe Fandon, a detective from Scotland Yard. So Bolard thought it was all Billy's fault, and that you had come to make sure where he lived only. But I knew different. And 'Mam' Meg told me you were a bad man, and wanted to take our home from us. But I knew different, and so Bolard got frightened, and the first thing I knew we were all going on a long journey—and here we've landed from over the ocean at Garson. And—oh, wasn't I glad when I saw you standing at the switch when General Grant's special was on the side track. And then, when Mrs. Bibby introduced you to me as Sam Josalyn, oh, I was so much afraid that you would recognize me before her that I almost fainted.'

"I was thunderstruck—in fact, I almost fainted myself. Here was a girl who had been quietly 'laying' for me, while I thought I was 'piping' her.

"My amazement was so great that I really think if at that moment the fellow who says that girls don't know a thing or two had approached me, I would have knocked him down from impulse without thinking what I was doing.

"'Now, Roe Fandon, show me your badge,' she added, 'for you are Roe Fandon, aren't you, Roe?'

"'Just as I am, without one plea,' I replied, pushing aside my coat and exposing my badge.

"'Then you are, for sure and certain, Roe Fandon?' she repeated, a twinkle of roguery in her bright eyes.

"'Yes, I am Roe Fandon as sure as you are Annette Godot.'

"'Annette Godot? Is that my true name?'

"'As sure as my true name is Roe Fandon.'

"'And you are Detective Roe Fandon, from Scotland Yard?'

"'Yes, my dear little dish of strawberries and cream, yes.'

"'And you will try to find my true papa and mamma for me?'

"'Yes, my night blooming Cereus, new-mown hay, yes.'

"'And you will marry me, Roe?'

"'Yes. I will be your John-Anderson-my-Joe-John, yes.'

"'Oh, I am so happy!' exclaimed the light-hearted little fairy, and, suddenly springing from the sidewalk, she flung her arms about my neck and clung there until she had kissed me 'frequent times.'

"'You seem very glad to learn that I am in truth a detective. Why is it?' I inquired, as we walked on.

"'Because I know that some deep mystery hangs over my life.'

"'Have not Bolard and Meg treated you kindly?'

"'Mam Meg has always treated me as if she had been my own mother, but I know she is not, although she says she is.'

"'How do you know that?'

"'Oh, I have overheard so many things when Bolard and Billy have quarreled.'

"'Do they speak of a crime when they quarrel?'

"'Yes—of a murder?'

"'And you are glad that I have come to arrest them for it?'

"'Oh, no, no! you must not arrest them!'

"'Then what would you have me do?'

"'Find my true papa and mamma for me.'

"'And that is why you are glad that I am a detective?'

"'Yes, partly. You see, I once had a dream—a very strange dream. Do you believe in dreams?'

"'Sometimes. What was the dream?'

"'Why, would you believe, I thought I was wading near Billy in a river of red, red water just like real blood. But—oh, it seemed so pretty, for all over the river were floating thousands and thousands of bright, shining gold coins. Then I thought I was sinking deeper, deeper down in the river as if I would drown. And just then I happened to look on the bank, and there stood a tall young man reaching out his hand to save me. And on his breast was a badge just like yours, so that I knew he was a detective. And his face was exactly like your face, Roe Fandon—and it was you.'

"'When did you dream this dream, Annette?'

"'Oh, long, long before I saw you in the tramp's dress at the cottage, and I dreamed it over and over, oh, so many times. And when I met you I knew the dream was true.'

"'So you see, Boke,' said the Scotch detective, pausing in his narrative, 'here is another wonderful instance of the telegraphy of brain to brain, or whatever you might call it. You see, doctor, Annette believing from what she had

overheard that the people in the cottage where she dwelt had been guilty of committing a murder for money, dreamed this dream, and I, a detective, unknown to her, dreamed the same dream at the same time in London. Now, the question is, by what mysterious power was the vision of the sleeping girl transferred to my brain so far off as London, so that the front of her dream was the back of mine?"

"Dreams are strange things," returned the doctor. "Swedenborg's brain was said to have been intelligently impressed with events happening hundreds of miles away, and the Holy Book says, 'your old men shall prophesy, and your young men dream dreams.' But the tendency of the age is to disbelieve such things, and so, I suppose, the polite explanation of the strange experience you speak of would be to let it go as a strange coincidence."

CHAPTER XIII.

ANGRY MRS. BIBBY.

"As we walked on," continued the Scotch detective, "I showed Annette the miniatures of her father and mother, informed her how I had unearthed the murder of her grandfather, and the precise nature of the errand on which I had been dispatched from Scotland Yard.

"She wept bitterly on learning her parents' fate, and protested against the arrest of Bolard, Meg, and Billy.

"'We will never more go near them, Roe,' she said. 'And now I just feel as if I had no relative in all the world.'

"'Tut, tut—and where then do I come in?' I asked.

"We were passing the jewelry store of one Squire Orday, at the time, and in order to cheer the little maiden, I led her within, and placed a splendid engagement-ring upon her hand.

"This prime remedy for all female ailments acted like a charm upon her spirits, and I was correspondingly happy.

"But every rose has its thorn, every pleasure its pain, and one of Squire Orday's daughters, who was a friend and pupil of Mrs. Bibby, was in the store, and saw the engagement-ring go on.

"Miss Mary Orday certainly never drew a prize for keeping secrets, and subsequent events cause me to think that

if the young ladies of her caliber might be induced to take as much interest in the ordinary business affairs of man, as in the joint matters of man and woman, telegraph wires would be useless.

"Soon after I led Mrs. Fandon, that is to be, into the circus pavilion.

"The sight was a new one to her, and the wild beasts of the menagerie, the antics of the clowns and athletes, and the music of the band caused the artless little maiden much enjoyment.

"When the performance had ended it was within a half hour of train time.

"And now what will we do?" asked Annette, as we strolled toward the depot.

"What do you think?" I asked.

"I think we should sail for England and take possession of the fortune my grandpa left behind him."

"This was rather a comprehensive programme, and I was loth to inform my fair *fiancee* that its present execution was not practicable.

"In order to do that, Annette," I said, "I must first find legal proofs against your grandpa's murderers, and you must aid me in doing so."

"How?"

"By returning in my company to Garson, and acting there toward me as if I were a piano tuner."

"We had now reached the cross street that turned toward the depot, one block from the widow's house.

"Mrs. Bibby stood upon the front steps of her home, evidently very angry, and gesticulating wildly.

"She was talking to a gentleman, who was a lawyer.

"Near by stood Miss Mary Orday, awaiting developments, and gathering points for up-town circulation.

"As the widow beheld us among the crowd that thronged the sidewalk her tones became so loud that her voice could be heard a block away.

"Annette was the first to perceive the furious lady, and she apprised me of the danger by pressing closely to me in fear, and saying as she did so:

"Oh, yes, Roe, we will go to Garson! Here is the crossing to the depot, and there is Mrs. Bibby looking at us so angrily. Oh, I wouldn't stay an hour in Corydon for the world."

"Glancing toward the widow's house I perceived that, in her rage, the wrathful lady had sprung to the sidewalk, evidently bent upon approaching us.

"The lawyer, however, led her away to procure a warrant for my arrest for breach of promise, as I afterward learned, and instructed her to make oath that she believed it was my intention to leave the State, and place the injury done her beyond repair.

"Hastening to the depot we found a special train waiting to bear the crowd of circus-goers eastward in advance of the regular express.

"Annette still trembled in fear of her angry teacher as I assisted her on board, nor did she breathe freely until we rolled away toward Garson."

"Poor child!" growled the doctor. "Affianced to a man from Scotland Yard, and this night an inmate of a New York den of thieves."

"Have patience, doctor; I am coming to that," said the Scotch detective.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PIANO-TUNER AT WORK.

"As the train rolled on," continued the Scotch detective, "I explained my plan of procedure to Annette, and began to prepare for the business ahead of me.

"The brakemen were lighting their lights, when, retiring to a corner of the car, I adjusted my gold-rimmed spectacles, and donned my gray wig, which, by the way, Bobe, cost me one thousand francs in Paris.

"Returning through the car, I overheard several jokes cracked by young men in the ears of their girls about the parson having been to see the elephant, and Annette was much surprised at my altered appearance.

"Although experience has taught me that even the finest make-ups are flimsy 'give-aways' in the eyes of practical thieves, I thought I was safe from recognition by 'Silly' Billy, who I alone feared.

"If, however, I was recognized as the man from Scotland Yard, I was prepared for the worst.

"In my coat-pocket were three pairs of handcuffs, while, easy of reach, in my pistol-pockets, were two excellent revolvers ready for work.

"It was quite dark when we stepped from the train at Garson station.

"The village consisted of a score or more of houses, and the station was but a platform.

"A large crowd had returned from the show, but almost the first person who attracted my attention was a tall man in a blue shirt and white slouch hat, whom I at once recognized as the crazy giant.

"He was calling out 'Bolard's Hotel!' and directing passengers toward a large, white frame-house, standing amid a grove of trees, a hundred yards south of the railway.

"His eye had been quicker than mine, for I perceived that he was gazing intently at me when my eyes met his.

"A moment he flitted about on the outskirts of the crowd, and then disappeared.

"As we approached the house I perceived that the bar at the right of the main entrance was filled with a noisy gang of drunken circus-goers.

"To the left of the entrance was the office of the hotel.

"It was dimly lighted, and its shades closed.

"Annette led briskly through the hall-way, and to the parlor at the rear of the office.

"Playing her role, as I had instructed, she pointed toward the organ, and said:

" 'This is the organ, Mr. Josalyn. You will, of course, be able to see for yourself what repairing is necessary.' "

" 'Very well, miss,' I replied, and at once began to thump on the keys like a professional tuner at work.

"At that moment the harsh voice of Meg Bolard called from above in the hall-way:

" 'Annette!'

" 'Yes, "Mam" Meg,' responded Annette, as she tripped lightly into the hall-way. 'The gentleman from Corydon has come to repair the organ.'

" 'All right,' came the answer. 'Come you up stairs here. I want to show you something your father has bought.'

"Annette hastened up the stair-way, and I continued my work upon the organ.

"In a very few minutes I had replaced the broken keys, and then, removing the top, I tightened the wires within, until the instrument sounded in much improved tone.

"All the while I made as much noise as I could, and seemed wholly absorbed in my work.

"No one entered the parlor, but I was not blind to the fact that keen eyes were upon me from without the window, which opened to the rear.

"Having completed my task, I seated myself at a table upon which burned a lamp, keeping my features changed so as to appear like any one else but myself.

"Taking forth note-book and pencil I began to figure as if arranging the amount of my charge.

"For some time I sat thus, and as Annette did not return I began to fear that my identity had been discovered by 'Silly' Billy.

"I resolved to proceed to business at once.

"Stepping from the parlor, I entered among the noisy throng in the bar-room, looked about, and withdrew.

"Crossing the hall-way to the office, I entered it.

"Bolard, presenting the same vigorous appearance as when I had met him at the cottage in England, was the sole occupant.

"He sat, as if in a doze, in an easy-chair tipped back against the office bar.

"A newspaper lay carelessly spread upon his knees, and a pair of spectacles hung awry upon his nose.

"I felt that I was in the presence of the actual murderer of Jean Godot.

"I knew that although he feigned sleep he was wide awake.

"I realized that my identity had been discovered, or suspected.

"The man before me believed that I was an officer on his trail, that his neck was in danger, and had resolved to out-general me in my own line.

"A keen steel cleaver or corn knife had been placed carelessly near the registry-book, as if by some one who had been laboring in a near-by corn field.

"There was a cool determination in the manner of the pretended sleeper which boded no good, and I somehow felt that one of us would never leave that room alive.

"Banging the door boldly behind me, I exclaimed as I entered :

" 'Ho, sir ! are you the landlord ?' "

" 'Yes, sir,' he responded, opening his eyes, and dropping his chair to the floor, as a man naturally would in waking from a doze.

" 'Uncommon drowsy, sir, to-night,' he added, rubbing his eyes. 'Did you just drop in on the train ?' "

" 'I came on the train a while ago to repair your organ.' "

" 'Oh, yes, yes—my daughter spoke to me of it. You will find it in the parlor.' "

" 'I have repaired it already—put three new key-tops on, tightened the cords inside, and it is now all right.' "

" 'How much do I owe you for the service ?' "

" 'Three dollars.' "

"Taking a roll of bills from his pocket, he handed me three dollars.

"Your daughter informed me that you proposed soon to buy her a piano. She plays well, but I am sure would progress more rapidly upon the larger instrument. I can offer some fine pianos all the way from one hundred and fifty dollars up as high as you wish to go.'

"And I presented my card—'Samuel Josalyn, Agent, Corydon, Pa.'

"On thinking it over, I have concluded not to buy for the present,' he responded, taking the card. 'But should I at any time think different, I will keep the card and write you.'

"Very well, sir, I won't insist. So, tell me, is there a train leaving toward Corydon to-night?

"Not before five in the morning—unless you might work through on a freight.'

"Then I suppose I must remain with you for the night,' I said, dropping into a chair.

"Very well, sir, we can accommodate you. Would you wish to retire now?

"No—no hurry. By the way, will you request your daughter to test the tone of the organ?—there might be something, you know, which she would prefer altered.'

"She has stepped out with her mother to a neighbor's. But I dare say the instrument is all right.'

"Then, for fear I might not meet her,' said I, taking Plinny's necromantic glass from my pocket, 'here is a music-box puzzle brought by Mrs. Bibby's brother, a sailor, and presented by that lady to Miss Bolard. I carried it for her from Corydon, on account of its weight, and have failed to give it to her.'

"Taking the black glass ball from my hand, he adjusted his spectacles and looked at it.

"A puzzle, did you say?' he asked.

"Yes. Hold it so. In a moment, as its iron bottom is warmed by your hand, the fluid within will move, and you will hear it play the notes of an air, like a music-box.'

"For several minutes he gazed at the glass intently.

"Does the fluid move?' I asked.

"Yes—it is just beginning,' he answered.

"You will soon hear it play, then.'

"A minute elapsed, and I said:

"Do you hear anything yet?"

"He returned no answer.

"The murderer was asleep!"

At this point the Scotch detective took the necromantic glass from his pocket.

"I have seen these 'sleep-glasses' frequently," said Dr. Macy, examining it closely, "they are constructed on a simple, scientific principle, and certainly exert a powerful mesmeric influence upon the beholder. But this is the first one I have encountered outside of India, and it is a crime, severely punished, to possess one in the domains of some of the rajahs."

CHAPTER XV.

"IRON" MIKE'S DEATH.

"For a time I sat gazing upon the sleeping murderer," continued the Scotch detective.

"I pictured the man before me, as he had approached softly behind Jean Godot, seized the keen razor in the hand that now held the glass ball, and slashed the old miser's throat with it.

"While the picture of the murder impressed my brain I placed the palm of my right hand softly under and against the hand that held the ball.

"'Bolard,' said I, 'I am Meg. Do you see me?'

"'Yes, Meg,' responded the murderer, without removing his stolid stare from the glass.

"I saw that he was thoroughly mesmerized, and in my power.

"'Tell, me, Bolard,' I continued, 'did old Godot say anything to you before you killed him?'

"'How could he? He had not even time to turn about, I slipped up so softly behind him.'

"'Did he not moan when you drew the blade across his throat?'

"'There was no sound save the gurgling of the blood, and the thud as he fell to the floor. But what blood was in a man so old?'

"'Was Pere Videre with you when you killed Godot?'

"'No. He was in London.'

"'But he knew all about it?'

"'Certainly.'

"'And it was he who wrote the supposed will?'

"'Yes.'

"'And it was he who kidnapped Alfonse Godot away to sea?'

"'He and Billy.'

"'Had murder been suspected on whom would you have thrown the blame?'

"'On Billy.'

"'Why?'

"'Because he is silly, and would likely do such a thing.'

"'When did you first meet Pere Videre?'

"'Haven't I told you a hundred times, he is my son?'

"'And what did he do to live before he came to old Godot's place?'

"'He was the same as I used to be.'

"'What?'

"'A thief.'

"'What name did you go by when you were a thief?'

"'Mike Drugo. The boys called me "Iron" Mike.'

"'And what did they call Pere?'

"'Jack Drugo, the "Squealer"—from his squeaking talk.'

"'How did you come to get in the employ of old Godot?'

"'I had served a ten years' sentence for burglary, and, being sick of London, thought I would strike the country. I came to Jean Godot's place, and had been told he was the richest farmer in the neighborhood. To get my bearings, I applied to him for work. He had recently dismissed his head-farmer from service. I told him that my father had been a French gardener, and he employed me. I found that he kept his ready money in bank, and so I worked along planning to get everything he had, and then "tie up prigging."'

"'Did Pere give you your share of the money?'

"'Of the ready, yes; and my share of the yearly income of the estate is over a thousand pounds each twelvemonth.'

"'Then you are rich?'

"'I own half of the estate, this house, two farms, and in the safe in the corner are thirty thousand dollars in bonds.'

"'Well, what of Annette?'

"'She must be kept close, and away from all men.'

"'Does she know anything that might harm us?'

"'Haven't you told her that I am suspected of a crime that I did not do?'

"'But that is nothing.'

"'But she has overheard things, Meg, and she suspects that she is not our child.'

"'She is the picture of her mother, is she not?'

"'Yes.'

"'Do you like the girl?'

"'Yes—but I wish she were dead.'

“‘She is innocent, I am sure?’

“‘That’s why I fear her.’

“‘Have you seen this fellow who has come with her from Corydon to tune the organ?’

“‘Yes. Billy knows him. He’s a Scotland Yard man in disguise.’

“‘Did he tune the organ?’

“‘He did so.’

“‘Did you pay him?’

“‘Yes.’

“‘How much?’

“‘Three dollars.’

“‘Well, what’s to be done?’

“‘Get Annette out of the way.’

“‘How?’

“‘Has the express train gone East yet?’

“‘No.’

“‘Where is Annette?’

“‘She is coming to the house with the detective.’

“‘Well, what’s to be done?’

“‘Call her to your room. Have a pot of hot coffee there. Tell her I have bought a sack of it. Drug the stuff, and bid her test the quality. Be careful of the dose. If you kill her, all’s over with us.’

“‘What is the dose needed?’

“‘Two of the small powders.’

“‘What then?’

“‘Put such clothes as you may need for a week in a traveling bag. Take Billy with you to carry it and help with the girl.’

“‘Where shall we go?’

CHAPTER XVI.

“‘HANG HIM! LYNCH HIM! SWING HIM UP!’

“‘Go around about, in the shade of the trees, to the other side of the track, and stand out of sight till the train comes.’

“‘What then?’

“‘Get on on the dark side of the train, back at the last sleeper.’

“‘And where will we go?’

“‘Tell the train-men that you are taking a crazy girl to the asylum at Harrisburg, and pay your fares there.’

“Does Billy go with us?”

“Yes, you will need him.”

“And what will we do at Harrisburg?”

“Keep on to New York, where everybody don’t know everybody else.”

“What then?”

“Take “shady” rooms, and keep the girl and Billy in them till I write to you.”

“Will you write to me?”

“Yes, in a week or so.”

“How will you address the letter?”

“I will send it from Corydon, and address it to Mrs. Margaret Bolard, New York city.”

“And how shall I pay expenses?”

“I will give you a thousand dollars for expenses.”

“And what shall I say to Annette when she awakes?”

“Tell her that she has the brain fever, and that you are taking her to a good doctor.”

“And what will you do?”

“Stay here.”

“Aren’t you afraid?”

“Why should I be? I’ve changed. I have property, and am known here as an honest man. The detective dare not take me without proof, and there’s no proof, if Billy and the girl are kept out of the way.”

“At that moment the shrill whistle of the east-bound express train, as it thundered into the station, sounded from the railway, and, realizing that Annette was to be an unwilling passenger thereon, I bounded to my feet.

“As I did so the necromantic glass roiled from Bolard’s hand upon the floor, and, with a wild stare, he awoke.

“I rushed toward him, but with great agility he sprang from the chair and dodged me.

“Pulling a pair of handcuffs from my pocket, I exclaimed, as I exhibited my badge:

“Iron Mike, you are wanted for the murder of Jean Godot.”

“As I spoke I sprang for him again, but he again eluded my grasp.

“His eyes fell upon the ugly corn-knife on the desk.

“Before I could prevent him he seized it and darted toward me.

“I returned the manacles to my pocket, and caught up a chair.

“As I did so the terrible weapon descended, spending its force in a savage cut upon the chair’s oaken bottom.

"About the room he chased me, striking furiously—I making the chair my shield.

"The man seemed crazed, and as if but half awake.

"At length he paused, well out of breath, and glared toward me like a wild beast at bay.

"I realized that the encounter meant death to one of us.

"Pulling forth a revolver I cast aside the chair and cocked and leveled the weapon at his head.

"Our eyes met, and I was cool and determined.

"'Iron Mike,' I commanded, 'hold up your hands!'

"As if by impulse, he raised his hands above his head, his right still clutching the corn-knife's handle.

"Keeping my pistol at his head, and my eye to his, I took the handcuffs again from my pocket.

"'Drop that knife!' I cried, as I advanced toward him.

"For a moment his eyes rolled wildly from side to side.

"Suddenly closing them, he brought the keen cleaver to a level with his throat, drew it violently across, causing a frightful gash, from which the blood gushed in a torrent, and, with a dull thud, fell forward upon the floor dead.

"The sight sickened me, and I almost felt as you did, Bobe, when your passengers had plunged to their deaths.

"In fact, it seemed to me as if my mind's picture of Jean Godot's murder had been transmitted so as to impress Bolard's faculties, and suggest the method of his death."

"Let me understand," interrupted Bridger. "Did you know in England that Bolard and Videre were 'crooked' people, and father and son?"

"I wish I had, Bobe," returned the Scotch detective. "But I learned that for the first in the strange interview I have recounted."

"And have you cabled the police authorities in London regarding the identity of this man Videre with Jack Drugo?" asked Dr. Macy.

"I have not," returned the Scotch detective. "But I have sent them a verbatim report of this interview, and asked them to find out if Videre and the 'Squealer' are the same."

"Did you ever meet this man Videre?" asked Bridger.

"I never had that luck, Bobe," returned the Scotch detective. "But I have seen the 'Squealer's' picture in the Rogues' Gallery, and would likely know him.

"My thoughts were of Annette," continued the Scotch detective, "and as the suicide fell I sprang to the window and lifted the blind to see if the train was still at the depot.

"I knew that unless some unusual occurrence had detained it it had certainly departed.

"A glance assured me that the train had passed upon its way, and that my little Annette, drugged to slumber, was being hurried eastward according to the plan of the dead man at my feet.

"A throng of circus-goers, who had missed the first train, approached the hotel from the railway, and one of the number suddenly cried out:

"A fight!"

"The cry was taken up by others of the crowd, and the noisy bar-room in response emptied itself of its 'drunks' upon the street.

"I had held at the window my cocked revolver in hand, and this I realized had caused the uproar.

"The next instant the hall-way was thronged with boisterous men, the office-door flew open, and the bartender, followed by the drunken mob, surged within.

"Great Heaven! Bolard is dead!" cried the bartender, starting back in horror, as he perceived the dead body of his employer in the pool of blood upon the floor.

"At once every one near enough to see me, pistol in hand, set me down as the innkeeper's murderer.

"Hang him! Lynch him! Swing him up!" they cried, and things began to look dark to a certainty.

"I felt that if I did not act promptly and well my life was of little account.

"Drawing forth and cocking my second revolver, I advanced several steps toward the excited crowd, which had paused where the dead man lay, and seemed plucking courage to spring forward and seize me.

"Men," said I, showing my badge, "I warn you all that I am an officer here on duty. I attempted to arrest this man for cause, and sooner than submit to arrest he killed himself, as you see."

"It's a lie! You came here to rob and murder him!" shouted a voice in the crowd.

"And then a score of voices set up the cry of:

"Hang him Lynch him! Swing him up!"

"And yet none seemed ready to take the initiative in seizing me.

"At length a man in the rear of the throng sang out:

"Go get a rope, and I'll hold him ready for it."

"Saying so, he pushed his way through the crowd and appeared at its head.

"He was a broad, burly farmer, and to a degree under the influence of liquor.

"He made several steps beyond the body in my direction, and the crowd eagerly followed him.

"Back!" I cried, leveling both pistols at his head. "I am an officer of the law, and if you advance a step farther you are a dead man!"

"The man perceived that I was determined, stopped where he stood, while the crowd surged backward.

"Have you a police officer or constable in this village?" I demanded.

"We have," returned the burly farmer, "but we'll need none in your case."

"Again the mob responded with shouts of "Lynch him!" and the burly farmer swayed to and fro as if making ready to spring forward and seize me.

"I kept my pistols at his head and my eye on his, while a confident and scornful smile played on my lips, and I shook my head at him so as to convey the impression that I considered him a blustering bully, and not to be feared.

"What is this constable's name?" I demanded.

"John Westbrook. He is here!" came from the hall-way.

"Stand aside and let Constable Westbrook pass in," I commanded.

"This the men did, and a tall, dark-complexioned man made his way to the front.

"He appeared perfectly cool and collected.

"Are you Constable Westbrook?" I asked.

"I am."

"Please step here beside me," I said, and he did so.

"The crowd seemed disposed to follow him, but I held them at bay.

"Constable Westbrook," said I, showing my badge, "I am a detective, have followed clues, and have found that this dead man was a murderer. I attempted his arrest to-night, and rather than submit, and before I could prevent it, he grasped up the corn-knife that lies near him, and cut his throat. I am, therefore, either an officer assailed in the discharge of my duty, whom it is your duty to assist, or a murderer in your custody, whom you must deliver to prison for trial, and defend against violence."

"Lynch him! Hang him, Westbrook! He's giving you taffy!" cried the mob.

"I know that what you say is my duty," responded Westbrook, "but how may I proceed against these hundred men?"

“‘Are there any level headed men in this crowd, whom you can deputize as your assistants?’

“‘There are some half dozen such men.’

“‘Then deputize them at once, and call them to your side to serve.’

“In a loud voice the officer called out the names of half a dozen men, and, deputizing them constables, ordered them to his side.

“‘Now, Constable Westbrook,’ said I, just as the appearance of an individual, bearing a coil of rope, was greeted by the mob with loud cheering, ‘the first thing to be done is to clear the house. Then you can place me under guard as a criminal, and deliver me on the morning train to the prison at Corydon.’

“Ranging his deputies in line he advanced upon the crowd, and in the name of the law ordered the excited men back, while I followed with pistols leveled as the officers forced the mob from the house.

“When the last would-be lyncher had been shoved without the doors were locked and barred.

“The constable and his men then entered the office, and I gave them a brief outline of the crime which Bolard had committed, and picking up the glass, explained how I had practiced upon the dead man through its mesmeric effect.

“‘I am truly sorry,’ I added, ‘that this excitement and turmoil have been visited upon your peaceful village, but cannot blame myself more than any officer might who had met the same ill-luck. For all know that I had far sooner have taken this man Bolard alive—though I had not hesitated to kill him, if that had been necessary. He killed himself, however, as I have said, when he found that his fight against arrest was useless—and the chipped bottom of that chair, with which I shielded myself from his blows, attests the truth of what I say.’

“Westbrook and his deputies, all of whom were intelligent men, believed my story, and promised that they would do all in their power to deliver me before a justice at Corydon in the morning, who should decide the matter.

“Meanwhile the turmoil had continued without, and handing one of my revolvers to Constable Westbrook, I told him that I was now in his custody.

“He decided that I should be locked in one of the sleeping apartments above, while he and his men would remain below to hold the mob in check.

“Accompanied by two deputies, I ascended to the second

story of the house and entered an unoccupied apartment, the door of which the officers locked after me."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HANGING MATCH.

"Alone in the dark room," continued the Scotch detective, "I stood for a moment framing my plan of procedure.

"I had no notion of being strung up by the excited throng of country people below, and decided at once that the surest way to prevent that experience would be to give them the slip.

"I could hear the voice of Constable Westbrook expostulating with the mob, who had made a battering-ram of a fence rail, and were endeavoring to hammer down the hall-way door.

"Stepping to a window, I peered upon the scene without.

"I had not dreamed that there were so many people in the neighborhood.

"It seemed as if every man, child, woman, and baby, for miles around, had gathered to the scene.

"The men forming the attacking party were huddled together, shouting themselves hoarse, and the larger portion of them were intoxicated circus-goers.

"The front of the hotel, where the battering-ram was in operation, was hid from my view, but I perceived that several enterprising citizens were busily engaged preparing a temporary scaffold for my accommodation directly opposite my window.

"They had rigged a block and tackle on a stout limb on an oak tree, from which dangled invitingly a noose and rope strong enough to have hung an elephant, and were now shoving a light road wagon to a position directly beneath.

"A huge bonfire near by cast its light upon the excited features of the varied throng.

"Between the fire and the railway a knot of women and children had congregated about a lady, who was excitedly haranguing them.

"As the bonfire blazed higher I perceived that this lady was none other than the wrathful widow, Mrs. Bibby.

"Near by stood her lawyer, and at his elbow was a slouchy-looking fellow, who I supposed was a constable armed with a warrant for my arrest.

"The party had evidently followed upon the regular express train from Corydon.

"The smoke and sparks blown from the bonfire suddenly swerved toward the crowd about the fiery little widow, and, to escape the annoyance, they moved to a position directly beneath my window.

"As the lady walked, however, she kept her glib tongue moving, and no resident of Garson will ever forget the volleys of indignation the excited little woman from Corydon poured forth against the gay deceiver, murderer, and horrid, deep-dyed villain, 'who so richly deserved the hanging he was to get,' and was now in the big frame hotel awaiting it.

"Despite the truly serious aspect of matters, and the possibility that I might be the principal performer in one of those American hanging matches which I had so often read of, I was highly amused at the scene.

"In fact, I laughed loud and long at the eccentricities of the little widow, as in shrill tones, and gesticulating wildly, she taxed her lively imagination to relate deeds in illustration of my utter depravity.

"Suddenly a very ungallant idea struck me.

"A pitcher of water stood near, on a wash-stand, and grasping it by the handle, I hurled its contents from the window so that the water, on striking, distributed itself between the widow, the constable and the lawyer, the lawyer receiving by far the best share of it.

"The scene that ensued eclipsed the circus.

"The widow let forth a wild shriek and fell back, supported by the two wet men.

"Every woman in the crowd, following her example, seemed to try to outdo her neighbor in the vigor of her screams.

"Then lifting their skirts, and grasping up their children, the entire female portion of the mob ran pell-mell toward the railway platform, while such cries as 'Oh, he'll murder us all! The murderer is loose! Heaven save us!' filled the air.

"The lawyer and constable, shaking the water from their dripping hats, assisted the widow along in the rear of the frightened swarm of females.

"She continued the while to shriek at regular intervals, her outcries modulating down from the extremely high pitch of the first to a hysterical sob.

"At the very moment that the ungallant pitcher upset itself the crash of wood-work and the cracking of flying

splinters warned me that an opening had been made by the men battering at the hall-way door.

"The attack on the door, however, was suspended at the first series of screams set up by the flying women.

"Thinking that I had sprung from the window, and was committing new deeds of blood in my efforts to escape, the large portion of the attacking party hastened from the door and about the corner of the hotel toward the bonfire.

"Others, less eager for my gore, darted away toward the platform of the station, and one broad, burly fellow—whom I perceived was the farmer who had so boldly volunteered to get me ready for the rope—actually reached the railway before the women did.

"Nor did his stampeded courage permit him to pause here, for far out in the darkness, across the track he flew, and as the furthest glimmer of the bonfire's light died away in the direction he took, it showed a pair of extended coat-tails."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ESCAPE.

"When the men learned the cause of the scatterment of the women they returned to their assault on the door with renewed vigor," went on the Scotch detective.

"As their blows fell upon the half-demolished barrier, and Constable Westbrook's threats came mingled with their shouts of victory, I began in earnest to look out a method of escape.

"Stooping upon my knees, I lit a match, and shielding its light with my hand, surveyed the apartment.

"It was an ordinary sleeping-room, and one of a row running from front to rear, on the second story. From its size and the depth of the hotel, I calculated that four rooms intervened between it and the rear wall of the house.

"A door, surmounted by a fan-light, joined the apartments front and back.

"These doors were locked, and as the bed of the room I was in stood closely against the front door, and a table near the rear door, I inferred that the entire row of rooms had unused connecting doors.

"Springing upon the table at the rear door, I set to work at the fan-light over it with the screw-driver I carried for tuning purposes.

"It was the work of an instant to remove the fanlight, place it upon the table, and take a survey of the room adjoining.

"Perceiving that it was dark and empty, I sprang nimbly over the door, and alighted safely on the bed against it.

"The mob had now forced an entrance into the hall-way below, and from the noise of the uproar seemed engaged in battle with the constable and his men.

"Again crouching low, I lit a match, and perceived that a similar door opened to the room in the rear.

"Springing upon the table near, I quickly removed the fan-light, and in a moment more had safely reached the second apartment from my prison.

"Two rooms now separated me from the rear wall of the house.

"In like manner I reached the third apartment, but to my dismay perceived that the last room had a light burning within it, and was therefore occupied.

"My would-be lynchers had now reached the second story, and seemed to be driving the constables before them.

"They would naturally first dash into the room from whence the water had descended, and finding the method of my escape, advance at once to the lighted apartment to head me off.

"Knowing that I had not a moment to lose, I boldly removed the intervening fan-light, and, lo ! I perceived a fine, fat, baby boy, of some two years, lying in the bed beneath me.

"His bright eyes were wide open, and he appeared amused rather than frightened at the uproar which had evidently awakened him.

"He saw me the instant I thrust my head and shoulders through the aperture, and was on the point of screaming out in terror, when, beaming down on him with the brightest smiles, I said :

"Don't be afraid, wootsy-tootsy baby Johnny ! I am good Santa Claus, what brings good little boys candies ! Mamma told me baby was a good boy, and just see the nice candy Santa Claus has brought baby !"

"I had happened to think of the two huge, barber-pole sticks of candy—that unique product of the circus candy-butcher's genius—which I had purchased in the show, that Annette might feed them to the elephant on passing forth, but which I had not thought of since.

"The baby did not seem to comprehend my words farther than that I meant him no harm, but when I displayed the

great, striped clubs of candy, the little fellow smiled sweetly.

"And when I asked his lordship if I might come in and give him the candy he said 'Des,' very promptly.

"I was over the door and upon the bed in a twinkling, and just as a loud crash told me that the door of my prison room had been burst open, I placed one huge stick of the stuff in each of his chubby fists.

"He at once endeavored to get both sticks into his mouth at once, and became oblivious to all else save his prize.

"Planting a kiss upon the little fellow's forehead I bade him be a good boy and eat his candy, and then made a bee line for the open window at the rear.

"All was dark beneath, and no one in sight.

"A friendly branch of a huge birch tree standing near touched the sill of the window, and on the instant the tumult sounded without the door of the room, and an ax fell with a crash upon it, I seized the bough as far out as I could reach, and sprang from the window.

"The branch bent with my weight directly in to the trunk of the tree, and down it I slid, without injury, to the ground.

"Darting backward from the house in the grove of trees, I shaped my course so as to give the lively village of Garson a wide berth, and approached the railway track.

"Reaching the track I turned upon it toward Corydon.

"The moon soon after arose, shedding its light upon the rails and sleepers, and I hastened on at a nimble pace, thinking of Annette, the dead landlord, the widow, and the events of the night in general, and planning my course for the future.

"Meanwhile, on finding that their game had flown, the mob, with many bloody noses and dark-colored eyes, dispersed—leaving the hotel in the hands of Constable Westbrook and his deputies."

CHAPTER XIX.

SHARP EYES AND RARE "WEEDS."

"It was long beyond midnight when I reached Corydon," continued the Scotch detective.

"I found Tom Bowling, the clerk, alone in the office of the hotel.

"I dropped in a chair at his side, related to him the ad-

ventures of the night, and informed him that I must be going eastward on the Atlantic and Great Western morning train.

"When I spoke of Mrs. Bibby's actions at Garson, and of the horrid pitcher which had upset itself and sprinkled her, the heartless rascal laid back and fairly roared with laughter.

"Suddenly grasping my hand with great warmth, he said :

"Sam Josalyn, you're a benefactor. The little widow will never smile on a stranger again, not even if his name were Lord John Fitz Morris Montmorency. She likes me better than any other fellow in town, and you can bet your life, when you come around again you'll find me owning a half interest in this hotel, and Jennie Bibby, as Mrs. Tom Bowling, helping to run it !"

"Feeling that I owed Mrs. Bibby an explanation of my conduct toward her, I penned her a note explaining all, and, with many good wishes, begged her indulgence and pardon.

"I added, in a postscript, that although I was a detective, she could rely upon me not to divulge her little smuggling game in the cigar line, but I trusted ere long she would make up her mind to adopt a pleasanter method of increasing her revenue, possibly as the wife of some good, honest and business-like son of Corydon.

"This epistle I intrusted to Tom Bowling's care for delivery.

"Tom and I then made a raid on the kitchen of the hotel, and though the cooks were yet abed, I succeeded in quieting my hunger.

"It was now past four in the morning, and as the train I proposed to take left the depot at six, I set about preparing myself for the journey.

"Retiring to my room I bathed, donned a suit of clothes which I had never worn in Corydon, adjusted my gold-rimmed spectacles and gray wig with care, and descended to the office, carrying my overcoat and traveling bag.

"So changed was my appearance that Tom Bowling did not perceive who the early riser was until I spoke, revealing the secret in a jocular manner.

"He averred that no one would recognize me, and that there was no danger of my being arrested on the way to the train.

"'Fail not to exchange letters with me,' he said, shaking my hand, warmly at parting, 'and rest assured that they

will never get hold of you if I can lead them astray on the scent. But keep your eyes peeled at the depot, for a train arrives on the P. and E. railway from Garson a few minutes before the train on the A. and G. W. is due going east, and the two depots are close together, you know.'

"Heeding his warning, I hurried away toward the depot.

"My plan was to take the A. and G. W. palace sleeping-car which ran via Salamanca, and east over the Erie railway to Elmira, and from this point journey southward on the Northern Central railway to Williamsport, through which passed the P. and E. railway upon which insensible Annette was being hastened eastward in charge of Meg Bolard and Billy.

"I would arrive at Williamsport some hours after the train bearing them had continued eastward, and I would trace them thence until I had placed Annette safe again in my own charge.

"As I neared the depot I perceived that the P. and E. train, against which Tom Bowling had warned me, had already arrived and was discharging its passengers.

"It was now broad daylight, but no one was on the streets save here and there a straggling railroad hand coming from or going to his labor.

"Mrs. Bibby's home laid in the opposite direction from the depot, and I supposed that if she had returned from Garson on this train she was already hastening thither.

"Consequently a cold shiver ran up my spinal column when I suddenly perceived a neat little woman briskly cross the railway track in front of the steaming engine, and approach directly toward me on the narrow board walk, which I was pursuing toward the depot.

"A glance assured me that the little woman was no other than Mrs. Bibby—evidently hurrying toward the hotel to vent her troubles in the ears of Tom Bowling's sister, the landlady.

"Here was a pretty pickle, for I assure you I had much preferred to have met a royal Bengal tiger under the circumstances.

"Barely a hundred yards intervened between us, and did I attempt to evade her by altering my course, her suspicions would be aroused on the instant, and one of her high-key shrieks would awake the town.

"Relying upon my disguise, and altering my features as best I could, I walked boldly on in the hope of safely passing the threatening danger.

"As the little lady approached closely I perceived that she had not gotten over her excitement.

"Her bright eyes snapped wickedly, and her little feet fell upon the boards of the walk with a rapidity and energy which denoted that whatever errand she had in view in visiting the hotel, she meant business.

"At length, when but a few yards separated us, my heart began to beat furiously, as if it was ashamed of its owner, and was trying to leap from my breast and inform the angry little lady that I was the horrid wretch who merited punishment at her hands.

"I stepped to the edge of the walk, that she might have abundant room in passing, and casting down my eyes as if to guard against plunging off into the muddy street, kept on, believing all was safe.

"Alas, such was not the case.

"I suddenly felt a little gloved hand dashed rather rudely upon my breast, and pausing abruptly and looking up in feigned astonishment, perceived that I was the widow's captive.

"'Oh, no, indeeddy! No, no, Mr. Sam Josalyn!' she cried. 'You don't sneak away from Corydon and from me in that way.'

"And the look her flashing eyes bestowed upon me as she spoke, had wilted down any one but a truly innocent man, or a thoroughly horrid villain.

"'Why, my dear madam, what mean you?' I exclaimed, in a surprised and dignified manner, and assumed voice.

"'Oh, you can't fool me with them spectacles and that false wig!' she cried.

"And she made a grab for the wig, intending, without doubt, to loosen it from the careful arrangement I had been at some pains to give it upon my head.

"'Madam,' I returned, grasping and restraining her hand, 'I am Senator John Crowley, of Erie, and am bound thither upon the train at the depot. Will you kindly find some one to return you to the lunatic asylum from which you have evidently escaped, and permit me to catch the train?'

"'Senator John Crowley, eh—I know John Crowley, of Erie, you villain!'

"Then clutching my coat, she fairly screamed:

"'Sam Josalyn, you don't get off so easy! And as for getting some one to take me to a lunatic asylum, I'll soon have you taken to a prison, where you will find time to

think over your shameful trifling with me, your murder of Bolard, your abduction of—'

"'Tut, tut! Stop there, Mrs. Bibby,' said I, in my natural voice. 'You are exciting yourself needlessly, as you will see when I inform you that officers of my class are forced to assume many roles when looking up evidence against those who defraud the government by smuggling, and so forth. However, I desire to be courteous in my duty, and I will hear what you have to say if you will permit me, while listening, to smoke one of these genuine "weeds" which you are so good as to import from Havana for the hotel.'

"As I reached for the cigar I brushed aside my coat, displaying my badge.

"On beholding the badge, and realizing that I was a detective, the fair smuggler loosened her grasp from my coat, started back, and gave me one withering glance.

"Then, as if a mad bull had suddenly dawned upon her gaze, she gathered her skirts about her, and, without a word, sailed off toward the hotel, as if her life depended on getting away.

"Knowing that her feelings would be somewhat soothed on receiving the letter at the hotel, I pursued my way to the depot in a happier frame of mind.

"The east-bound A. and G. W. train soon after arrived, and without event I boarded the palace sleeping-car at its rear.

"As the train moved off I stepped upon the rear platform to finish the widow's fragrant 'weed,' which I had fired, and think how readily the fair smuggler's sharp eyes had penetrated my disguise.

"I felt, as I smoked, that my recent work had not been the strict performance of a detective officer, and blamed myself somewhat that in my haste to the rescue of Annette I was leaving behind me, unexplained to the proper authorities, the death of Bolard.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DRUGGED GIRL.

"At ten that night I reached Williamsport," continued the Scotch detective.

"I set out at once to learn if the parties 'wanted' had passed eastward in the train on which they had set forth.

"I was directed to the conductor of a sleeping-car which had been detached from the morning's east-bound train from Garson, and was now attached to a train about to start for the West.

"I learned from the car's conductor that a middle-aged Irishwoman and a tall, simple-looking man had entered the car on the evening previous at Garson, supporting between them the form of a heavily veiled girl, whom the Irishwoman said was her insane daughter on the way to an asylum in Harrisburg.

"‘They paid me,’ he continued, ‘for two state-rooms, and ordered them made up immediately, so that they might retire.’

"While the porter made up the left-hand state-room the party sat quietly in the one opposite, and as soon as the bed was ready the Irishwoman lifted the veiled lady in her arms, and placed her in it.

"Then bidding the tall fellow go to bed as soon as his state-room was ready, she lay down beside the motionless girl, and closed the door of the state-room.

"The silly fellow seemed to obey her commands as if he were her boy, and lay down as she had bidden, as soon as his bed was in readiness.

"Soon after the train conductor came through, and in response to his tap the Irishwoman opened the state-room door, peered forth, and asked :

"‘Who are you?’

"‘The conductor,’ returned that official, extending his hand for the ticket.

"‘Oh, yes,’ she returned. ‘Well, there’s three of us, and we do be goin’ to Harrisburg. How much is the fare?’

"‘Twenty-four dollars for three to Sundbury. There another conductor takes the train, and you will pay him six dollars more.’

"‘For three?’

"‘Yes, for three.’

"She handed him a bill, and he returned her the change, and passed on.

"She closed the state-room door, and I had almost forgotten about the three strange passengers until some while after daylight in the morning, as the train was nearing Williamsport, I heard the girl's voice in the state-room exclaim :

"‘Oh! where am I! Is that you, Fandon?’

"‘Is that me who?’ returned the Irishwoman. ‘Sure it’s mesilf, yer mother, that’s here wid you, Annette.’

““And where are we going on the cars?”

““Away out of the reach of that villain ye call Fandon. And how did ye come to know him so well as to call him Fandon?”

““Who?”

““Why, that imp of an organ-tuner ye brought wid ye from Corydon last night.”

““Didn’t Billy tell you his name was Fandon?”

““And did you hear him?”

““How would I know his name, if some one hadn’t told me he would take me away with him?”

““Och, poor child! ye’ve been imaginin’ strange things. Sure, ye were so excited whin you came to me room last night at whatever it was that you fainted complately away just as I was givin’ ye a sup of the new coffee. And the father said it was a touch of the brain fever ye had. Hurry up and begone wid her, sez he, and take Billy wid you, sez he, and travel ye right East wid her, to some good doctor, if you find she nades it. And, above all, sez he, kape her out of the way of that devil of a tuner, sez he, for faith, sez he, I believe he’s charmed the poor crature. And doin’ as he bade me, me daughter, I’m takin’ ye on a visit to New York.”

““And is Billy with you?”

““Yis, and aslape ferninst us in a rattletrap box like this.”

““But you don’t mean to harm me? You aren’t angry with me, are you?”

““Now, luk at that—luk at that. What shud put such nonsense in yer head? Was it to harm ye, now I’ve rared ye from a baby till ye be a little lady fit for a king’s wife? But it’s to kape ye away from that villain of a tuner that I’m determined.”

““What did he do?”

““What did he do? Nothing.”

““But he only came with me to tune the organ.”

““The vagabond!”

““And where is he now?”

““To ould Nick, his father, I hope!”

““Well, don’t let us speak of him any more.”

““That’s right, me daughter—forget the villain. I’ll see that he sha’n’t bring you to harm.”

““Oh, I feel so sick and light-headed.”

““And well you might, me daughter, but we’ll soon be where the train breakfasts, and there you shall take a good, strong cup of tea and a foine hot meal.”

““When the porter had routed all hands up to take breakfast and change cars at Williamsport,’ continued the sleeping-car conductor, ‘I passed the open door of the Irish woman’s section, and perceived her washing the face of her charge with a wet towel, much as a mother would do that of a child.’

““The girl was strikingly beautiful, and, unmannerly as it certainly was, I stood stock-still for a moment gazing at her.’

““Perceiving this, the Irishwoman, with an angry leer, shut the state-room door, and when the party left the car at Williamsport the young lady was deeply veiled, as she was on last night.’

““She, however, tripped lightly along, and did not seem to be either sick or insane.’

““And, taking everything into consideration,’ added the conductor, ‘I made up my mind that some mystery surrounded the trip of those three passengers, and, in fact, I expected to hear of a detective, or some one, following them up. And you are a detective, are you not?’

““I am,’ I responded, ‘and I have been much aided by thus meeting you. Tell me, did the party continue eastward upon the same train?’

““They did.’

““At that moment the train moved off, and, as the sociable trainman sprang on board, I slipped a ten-dollar bill in his hand and waved him adieu.”

CHAPTER XXI.

DOCTOR MACY AND THE RAJAH.

““The rest is easily told,” continued the Scotch detective. “I traced Meg, ‘Silly’ Billy, and Annette here to New York, and here I have since hunted for them as best I could, considering that I am ‘wanted’ in Western Pennsylvania to answer the charge of murder, and I have had to keep ‘shady.’

““Come, Bobe,” he added, swinging his chair about to face Bridger, “you are better posted in regard to these American cities than I, tell me then where think you is Annette to-night?”

““The only basis we have to go on that I see,” returned Bridger, “is our discovery of ‘Silly’ Billy in the role of a footpad to-night. But if it is as the Pullman car conductor

said, that Bill obeys Meg Bolard's will like a dog, it would seem to follow that she has sent him forth to steal. Perhaps, not hearing from her husband, she fears that her money may run short; or, very likely, 'she has hired secluded apartments from some member of the criminal class, who is filching from her a large hush-money rent.'

"Then we must take a look about through the city's thieves' 'kens,' and find if we can what 'crooked' people might have such apartments to let—eh, Bobe?"

"I would think so," said Bridger.

"God bless you, yes, boys!" exclaimed Dr. Macy, gazing at the miniature of his daughter, which he still held in his hand. "You must look everywhere, and pause not until Annette is safe. Alas, how hard it is to think that the sweet child is this night an inmate of a thieves' den, and that I, wretched man, am the cause of it all. But I know that you will find her for me, boys—for surely God's mercy is evident that I am here to know that she lives, and that two such detectives are bent on her rescue.

"I promise you each five thousand dollars, boys," he added, wiping the moisture from his eyes, "if you bring the dear girl to my arms in safety."

"Then that makes your reward, Bobe, just ten thousand dollars," said the Scotch detective, "and my reward shall be Annette, eh, doctor?"

"If she loves you, Detective Fandon, I will interpose no objection to your happiness," returned Dr. Macy. "Ah, I have learned wisdom in that regard from the case of Alfonso and Alice."

"That reminds me," quoth the Scotch detective. "You have not as yet told us of your wanderings on leaving England, or how you happened to meet Annette's father, Alfonso, whom you say still lives."

"It is a roundabout tale," returned the doctor, "but if you can find patience to listen to it, I will tell it to you.

"On that cruel day," he began, "when in foolish, criminal anger I left England, I sailed directly for Australia.

"There I remained for years, squandering my fortune aimlessly, and leading a fast life.

"At length, becoming broken down from drink, I resolved to taste liquor no more, and from that day I have not done so until to-night.

"Leaving Australia, I visited other countries, and finally brought up in India almost penniless.

"In Madras I began the practice of medicine—for a time with little success.

"In fact, my practice was in the role of an assistant of a resident English physician.

"One day a pressing request came to him from a rich rajah, whose possessions lay far in the interior.

"The rajah was afflicted with a large tumor in his neck, which was fast growing in size, and his messenger begged that the doctor would repair with him to his master's palace and remove it.

"From the messenger's statement of the case it presented at best a very difficult surgical operation.

"A long and fatiguing journey, at the expense of valuable time and possible health, was necessary to reach the royal patient.

"Then, did the operation, in an unpropitious clime for surgical experiments, prove abortive or fatal, the operator's life might pay the forfeit.

The doctor, therefore, promptly refused to go, but recommended me as his assistant, and one perfectly competent to perform the needed operation.

"Feeling that it would retrieve my shattered fortunes if I succeeded, and that the possible assassination which might follow failure would only end a wrecked life, I at once accepted the proffered commission and accompanied the messenger on the long journey to his afflicted master.

"I found the rajah surrounded by all the pomp of royalty, and perceived that living as he did, remote from the central points of English power, his authority was as absolute in his domains as that of any prince might be over his subjects.

He was a very intelligent man, however, and readily submitted to all my directions regarding the operation.

A room in the palace was cooled by large fans operated by natives, and causing a continual flow of air.

The bed upon which the rajah must remain until the wound caused by the operation should heal, was placed in this apartment.

"A cot was placed near it upon which the operation was to be performed.

I selected six of his strongest blacks as my assistants, and excluded all others from the apartment save the royal patient and myself.

"All things being so prepared, on the second day after my arrival I administered chloroform, and in a few minutes successfully removed the huge, scrofulous tumor, and dressed the wound.

"The rajah was placed comfortably upon his bed, and

when the effects of the anæsthetic had worn away, and he returned to consciousness, a maid stood near with a steaming bowl of coffee, which I ordered him to drink.

"He was surprised to find how easily he breathed, for for months his breath had been drawn by the most painful effort, and when I showed him, in a mirror, that nothing remained of the malady, save the carefully bandaged wound from which the ponderous tumor had been taken, his delight knew no bounds, and he declared that I should never quit his domain, but remain the richest and most privileged of his courtiers.

"He soon entirely recovered, and to prove his gratitude gave me a palatial bungalow upon the royal grounds, and a complete retinue of servants, who obeyed my every beck.

"He also presented me diamonds and jewels to the value of many thousand pounds.

"My aim now was to escape from his rule with these rich movables, return to England, find my daughter, and make amends for the cruelty I had practiced upon her in my rage.

"My departure was not to be easily accomplished, for the rajah, although treating me at all times with the greatest kindness, had firmly determined that my remaining near to administer to his ailments was a necessity due himself.

"His people, from the highest to the lowest, knew his will, and not being permitted to communicate with the agents of the British Government, or to dispatch any messages or letters whatever, I was, after all, but a captive, though dwelling in princely splendor.

"For eight long years I remained without favorable opportunity to escape, and although I was aging rapidly under the restraint, I never gave over my hope of making my way, ultimately, from the rajah's domains.

"I knew that an assumption of contentment would best put him off his guard, and abet my aim.

"I, therefore, learned the language perfectly, and appeared gay and jovial at his entertainments, and at all times.

"At length my opportunity came.

"His stable was located some five leagues distant from his palace, at the edge of a smooth, grassy plain.

"His favorite horse had been afflicted with a disease in one of his forelegs, which resembled elephantiasis in man, and the rajah asked me if I might not be able to perform an operation upon the animal's swollen member, and recover it to its proper form.

"I at once assured him that I could do so.

"A time was set for my departure for the stable, and secreting my diamonds about me, I entered the waiting palanquin, and bade the sturdy blacks who bore it, and the score of relief bearers and servants, who formed my retinue, to proceed.

"It was evening when I reached the stable, and accompanied by the rajah's chief groom, I at once visited the ailing horse.

"Informing the chief groom that it would be necessary to keep the swollen leg tied about with a bandage saturated with ointment for a number of hours ere the operation might be attempted, I prepared a simple balsam, and bade the stablemen bind it carefully about the diseased limb.

"I was then shown where I was to lodge in the chief groom's bungalow, and was afterward served with a relishable meal.

"I then requested that the finest animals in the rajah's stable should be shown to me.

"I spoke of the grandly bred horses of England, intimated that I was an enthusiast in horseflesh, and that nothing suited me better than a swift gallop in the evening air.

"And, finally, I requested that a particularly fine and spirited horse, which the chief groom showed me, should be saddled that I might enjoy a canter upon his back.

"The rajah's chief horseman was delighted at my knowledge of horseflesh and the interest and praise I lavished upon his stable, for I had promised that, on my return to the palace, I would commend him highly to his royal master.

"He was only too willing that I should mount the noble steed I had desired saddled, but as the blacks led forth the fiery animal, he feared that so aged a man as myself had better mount a less fractious horse.

"His fear I offset by assuring him that, old though I was, I was an expert rider, and that the high mettle shown by the restless and prancing steed suited me exactly.

"He then pointed out to me the direction I might safely ride, and cautioned me against going far upon the road leading from the edge of the plain, as it was coming night, and I might become lost in the jungle, and a prey to wild beasts.

"I assured him that I would heed his advice, and while the sturdy blacks exerted all their powers to hold steady

the spotted horse, aided by the chief groom, I mounted to the saddle, and took the bridle in hand.

"As soon as the blacks let go their hold of his head the noble horse darted away like the wind.

"Fortunately for me, I can ride, and, moreover, had carefully studied the lay of the country.

"I knew that if I might traverse some fifty leagues to the southward without accident I would reach a river upon whose banks a party of enterprising Englishmen were washing for diamonds, and I was resolved that the flying steed beneath me should bear me there.

"For three leagues across the plain, and along the pathway through the jungle, the gallant animal bore me without a break in his mad gallop.

"Then easing down to a gentle lope, when his outburst of play had spent itself, he carried me on at a steady gait.

"The moon arose soon after nightfall, and the calls of wild beasts sounded at intervals from the jungle near by, but I pushed on safely through the night.

"At dawn in the morning I paused, for several hours, to water the now jaded steed, and permit him to eat a breakfast of grass, and that evening I reached the mining camp, told my story, and was kindly welcomed.

"The next day I started back my faithful charger, equipped with bridle and saddle, in the direction he had brought me, and there is little doubt but that the noble animal accomplished the journey alone, and appeared riderless to the astonishment of the chief groom.

"And, I suppose, that both the chief groom and his master, the rajah, to this day mourn my death, believing that I lost my way in the jungle, and had dismounted to be torn to pieces by lurking beasts.

"Aided in my escape by the diamond hunters, and changed in my apparel to resemble one of their class, I found no difficulty in completing my journey to Madras.

"I found, on arriving there, however, that my old friend, the doctor, had died; nor did any one recognize me, so great had been the change in the European population.

"Disposing of several of my brilliants for some two thousand pounds, I clothed myself as an English gentleman, and took apartments, awaiting the departure of a steamer for England."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE INK MARK ON THE SAILOR'S BREAST.

"One evening," continued Dr. Macy, "while rolling upon the beach and enjoying the cooling breeze from the ocean, I chanced upon a number of wharf-workers bathing.

"As I gazed toward them they seemed to become suddenly excited, and I perceived that one of their number had ventured forth too far in the breakers, and was drowning.

"Two sturdy blacks swam forth to the man's rescue, and succeeded in bringing him to shore.

"Approaching where they had laid his unconscious form upon the beach, I informed them that I was a physician, and they made way that I might view the rescued man.

"I saw at a glance that he was a European, although his thin features were tanned brown from contact beneath the tropical sun.

"I also thought that I had seen the man somewhere before.

"Directing the men how to proceed in his resuscitation, I observed them carefully as they did my bidding.

"In handling the rescued man one of the blacks by accident tore aside the rough shirt which clung to his breast, and I perceived that the trade-mark of the sailor—a character in red and blue ink—was wrought upon his breast.

"He now breathed freely, and, dispatching one of the blacks to procure a dram of brandy, I directed that he should be laid upon his back in the sand.

"Stooping over him, I pulled aside the shirt, and, out of curiosity, inspected the ink-mark upon his breast.

"How great was my amazement to find that it consisted of two English flags wrought in a border to surround the name, 'Alfonse Godot.'

"I studied the man's features carefully, and although illness and hardship had altered them greatly, I perceived that without doubt they were those of my former coachman, Alfonse.

"I thought, if Alice's husband was here before me, a poor, sick sailor in a foreign land, what, alas! had been her fate?

“Possibly the man at my feet had tired of his wife on finding that her father had left her to her fate, and deserted her—and the surmise caused my blood to boil in kindling anger.

“But the bent of my mind had changed, and realizing that I myself was the direct cause of all the troubles that had befallen Alfonse and Alice, I resolved to be the rescued man’s friend come what would.

“At least from his lips I would learn something that I yet knew not concerning the outcast daughter who had again become my sole thought, my life’s aim, and my heart’s idol.

“I ordered the reviving man conveyed to my own apartment, and placed upon my own bed.

“Under the stimulus of the dram of brandy he speedily recovered consciousness, and making myself known to him, I begged him to tell me the fate of his wife, Alice.

“‘Alas! Dr. Macy, I know not,’ the poor fellow said when he had become assured that I was his old master, and promised friend. ‘Alice and I lived happily while our means lasted, and even when we found that you had left us to our fate, we hoped that my father would aid us. The hope proved vain, and I was forced to behold my gentle wife and the tender babe in her arms suffering from want.

“‘In my quest for employment I one day met a man who spoke to me kindly and offered to procure me a situation in a match factory.

“‘We then entered a porter-house at his solicitation, and I drank some beer—and the next that I knew I was on board a sail ship, and far out to sea.

“‘How can I express in words the thoughts that racked my brain when I perceived that I had been drugged, kidnapped, shipped as a common sailor, and realized that my starving wife and child were there behind in the cruel streets of London, without a friend.

“‘I begged the captain to return me upon passing ships, but he only gave me grog and put me to work.

“‘The ship was bound for Calcutta. From thence she sailed to China; thence to San Francisco; thence again to China, and thence for England.

“‘I had been three years upon her, had a goodly sum of money due me, and looked forward prayerfully in hope of reaching home and England once more.

“‘Alas for my hope! The ship was driven in a hurricane upon an island in the Pacific Ocean, and five seamen, I of the number, were alone saved from the wreck.

"From this island we were taken by a ship bound for Madras.

"On arriving here I stated my case to the British Consul, but he would do nothing for me. Meanwhile I could obtain no chance to ship as a sailor, for my lungs had become affected, and I was too weak to do duty as a seaman. And here, among the blacks upon the wharves, I have remained, earning my existence, and dying by inches.

"On thinking over all my woes," the poor fellow added, "I resolved this day to end my misery at once. If I might not meet wife and child in this world, I trusted that there was another beyond where I might at least learn their fate. And thus resolved, I swam boldly away from my black companions in the breakers, and, but for them, had now been dead."

"Although wasted and weak from a confirmed long disorder," continued Dr. Macy, "Alfonse's condition improved somewhat under treatment, and a few days subsequent to our strange meeting we sailed together for London, praying and hoping against reason, to find Alice and her child somehow providentially preserved, and safe to greet us.

"Arriving in London we sought an inspector of police, and begged that the records might be searched in the hope that the charities and corrections had taken the poor starving girl and her babe in their charge.

"The inspector informed us of Jean Godot's death, and of the letter which had been accepted in lieu of his will and that Alfonse need only prove that he was Jean Godot's son to come into legal possession of the estate left by his father.

"Videre, he said, was at the time engaged in building a race-track upon one of the farms where he kept a stable of thoroughbred race-horses, and he advised Alfonse to lose no time in notifying him and the proper authorities of his return.

"He then told us that he feared that Alice was dead, and that he had understood that her babe was being reared, in ignorance of its parentage, by a family called Bolard, who had emigrated to America.

"When we pressed him for further information his words were :

"The truth is, there is an air of criminal mystery enshrouding the death of Jean Godot, and implicating the Bolards. You will, therefore, mention to no one that you have called here, as it might retard your own interests, and our efforts. A detective, in whom we have every reliance, is now in America on the trail of the Bolard family,

and the girl. Our instructions are sent to him through the office of the British Minister at Washington, and I will at once inform him regarding this new feature in the case, the arrival in London of Alfonse Godot and Dr. Macy.'

"On departing from Scotland Yard we mutually resolved that while I should set forth at once for New York and find the detective of whom the inspector spoke, Alfonse should remain for a time in England, to lay claim to his father's estate, and then join me in America, in the search for his daughter.

"Disposing of my diamonds, I supplied him with ample funds, and taking what I deemed needful in my pocket, I deposited the remainder in bank, and sailed for New York, instructing Alfonse that on his arrival in that city he would learn my address by visiting the British Consul there resident.

"On arriving here I took apartments at the St. Nicholas Hotel, and at once wrote to the British Minister at Washington for information.

"Some days afterward I received a reply from his secretary, stating that although he was in receipt of several letters addressed to the Scotland Yard man who was trailing the Bolard family, he had not heard from him for several weeks, but on doing so would promptly inform me as to his whereabouts.

"Since then," added Dr. Macy, "I have anxiously awaited the promised tidings fruitlessly, until this night I followed the young woman whom I foolishly thought might prove to be Annette, to be assaulted and robbed on the street, and to find myself, in the providence of Heaven, here."

"I have been too neglectful of late," exclaimed the Scotch detective, as Dr. Macy concluded. "I must at once telegraph the British Minister at Washington, and have those letters forwarded to me. Shall I have them sent to this number and in your care, Bobe?"

"Certainly, if you choose," returned Bridger.

"But," he added, pointing to the clock on the mantel shelf, "it is now beyond midnight, and the British Minister is where we must soon be, if we hope to do anything on the morrow, in bed."

As he spoke Bridger arose, opened forth a sofa bed, drew it near the fire, placed pillows and bed-clothing upon it, and informed the Scotch detective that it awaited their joint use.

Dr. Macy insisted upon returning to his rooms in the hotel, but the two detectives would not hear of it, and lead-

ing the old man to his own bedroom adjoining, Bridger bade him turn in.

"God bless you, my brave boys," was the old man's good-night benediction. "I will do whatever you command."

CHAPTER XXIII.

HAWK AND HAWK.

Early on the subsequent morning the three men arose from their slumbers.

All were in fine spirits, and Dr. Macy pronounced himself in splendid health, and only suffering from a soreness in the region of the throat, as a reminder of the past night's assault.

Bridger prevailed on the Scotch detective to cast aside his gray wig and spectacles.

He assured him that the vague description of Sam Joselyn, as telegraphed by the Corydon authorities, had long since drifted from the thoughts of the ever busy New York detectives, if indeed it had ever reached them—and that, being in his company, nothing was to be feared.

At sunrise the two detectives accompanied Dr. Macy to his hotel, and breakfasted with him.

Then bidding the old gentleman content himself within doors, nurse his sore neck, not follow any more girls, or get into any fresh scrapes, the sleuth-hounds returned to Bridger's rooms, and changed their apparel.

The Scotch detective wrote a note to Tom Bowling, the Corydon hotel clerk, inclosing a letter addressed to "Mrs. Margaret Bolard, New York city," which he requested him to mail at that point, and then penned a telegram to the British Minister at Washington, asking that his mail be forwarded in Bridger's care.

When the two detectives again descended to the street they wore blue woolen shirts, resembling in manner and appearance two sturdy wharfmen.

After dispatching the letter and telegram, the Scotch detective and Bridger, following the plan they had determined on pursuing, visited a score of the lowest thieves' resorts and dives, in New York.

The rough round they made could not be successfully accomplished without drinking some, and early in the day the sleuth-hounds assumed to be intoxicated, that there

might appear reason for their tasting lightly of the mugs of beer they everywhere ordered.

The regular detectives of the New York force are well known to the resident criminal classes, but the Scotch detective and Bridger, being strangers, passed unsuspected.

Many attempts were made during the day to entice the tipsy wharfmen where they might be robbed, and they learned much of special interest to the New York force.

Nothing transpired, however, until late in the afternoon, upon which the detectives could hang the shadow of a hope that they had found a clew to the whereabouts of "Silly" Billy, Meg, and Annette.

Late in the afternoon, as they sauntered carelessly along in the Bowery, gaping in countrified ignorance at every thing and everybody, a tall, handsomely formed man of forty passed them.

His clothing was after the English type, and rather flashy, and the man seemed to be intoxicated.

Upon his shirt-front he sported a diamond, and a watch chain dangled from the fob pocket of his trousers.

His features were decidedly those of a shrewd, vicious sport.

His eyes were full, leering, sensuous, his mouth shapen for the flowing bowl, and his beard neatly rounded about his bloated face after the manner of an English turfman.

"His lordship surely hails from England," said Bridger, as the man passed.

"Surely," returned the Scotch detective, "and I have certainly seen his features before—where, I can't say. Suppose we stroll with him?"

Half a block distant, upon the corner, stood two young men.

Both were fashionably dressed.

One was a short, compactly built human bull-dog, who sported a very high shirt-collar and a shoe-brush mustache.

The second was a slender, wiry human rat.

That both had worn striped clothing, and were thieves, the detectives believed without further introduction, but they afterward learned that the gentleman first mentioned was "Tom, the Frog," a well-known burglar, and that the sharp-eyed young man, his companion, was "Jack, the Fork," an equally well-known pickpocket.

They had, however, "tied up priggings" in their respective lines, and were now working a new "racket."

This game, from its peculiar nature, and a judicial application of knowledge concerning police patronage, which

they had learned in passing through the mill, enabled them to dwell for the time in clover, and in the enjoyment of as much peace and safety as the grocer dealing out his sanded sugars.

Both of these gentlemen were well-known to the police, and their portraits adorned the Rogues' Gallery in Mulberry street.

As the inebriated Englishman passed this pair of corner liquor store beauties he glanced very shrewdly toward them, then turned down the cross street directly by them.

"Tom, the Frog," was first to perceive the sport, who, as he progressed upon the side street, seemed to be much more intoxicated than when on the Bowery.

"Inkle the nazy," remarked "Tom, the Frog," nudging his rat-eyed companion and nodding his head in the direction of the staggering man.

The Englishman had proceeded but a dozen steps from where the two men stood, and as soon as "Jack, the Fork," saw the "game" he hastened in his direction.

"Tom, the Frog," stood still, watching the outcome of his companion's venture.

Meanwhile the two sleuth-hounds had reached the corner, and appeared to be so much under the weather from drink that their chief aim seemed to be to keep each other from falling down.

From the Englishman's actions they felt assured that he, like them, was shamming intoxication, that he knew the character of the men he had passed on the corner, and that he was placing himself in their way for a purpose.

The two thieves had evidently accepted him as a first-class "drunk," worthy of a run through their "racket."

It was, therefore, not a case of hawk and sparrow, but of hawk and hawk.

As he approached the tipsy stranger the "roper" stepped nimbly forward and slapped him familiarly on the back.

The Englishman paused, turned about, looked inquiringly into the "roper's" shrewd, smiling face, and mechanically grasped the hand which that worthy held forth with all the assurance of an old acquaintance.

"Well, well! ha, ha, ho, old boy! is here where I find you?" exclaimed "Jack, the Fork." "By the way, what the duse are you doing in this part of town, you know?"

"Well—that is—hic!" returned the apparently astonished drunkard. "Excuse me, ye know—but, pray, where have I met you before?"

The man spoke in a strange, high-keyed, squeaking voice,

and as he heard it the Scotch detective almost forgot his roll of a "lush," and started forward impulsively in his direction.

Grasping him by the coat-tail, Bridger pulled him back and warned him to keep his senses.

"Bobe," whispered the Scotch detective, "I thought his features were familiar, and now that squeaking voice. What if he proves to be the 'Squealer?' "

"If he does, it's a great 'lay,' and worth care and patience. But what would bring him over the ocean?"

"What brought the Bolards here? But we'll find out what or who he is."

"You don't mean to say you don't know me?" continued the roper. "No kidding now—look me square in the face."

The Englishman did so, and said:

"Well—hic—ye know, me friend—at all events I'm a gentleman, and I would—hic—dislike to say to a gentleman of your appearance, who says he has met me, that his looks impressed me so commonly that I have forgotten him."

"Well, I'll be hanged—do you forget?"

"Not 'zactly—but can't—hic—say that I quite remember."

"Then I must jog your memory?"

"If you—hic—please."

"Why, then—can it be possible that you don't remember? Not an hour ago, in the Broadway liquor store, we had a drink, and talked about our meeting on the steamer coming over."

"The steamer—hic—eh? Did you come over on the Queen with me?"

"Did I come over with you on the Queen? What a question! Why, confound it, man, don't you know I came over on the Queen with you?"

"Did, eh?"

"Why, of course."

"In the cabin?"

"In the cabin? Certainly! Didn't we eat at the same table? Didn't we smoke and chat together nights in the smoking-room aft? But, ha! ha! pardon me—I see what's the matter. You're a little how-come-you-so, you know, you rascal, and forget!"

"No, no—only—hic—celebrating my safe arrival—at's all."

"Then take a friend's advice. New York is a bad city; don't drink another drop, and be very careful with whom you keep company."

"That's good advice, me—friend—and I—hic—s'pose you belong to the young men's society?"

"No, I confess I should, but I don't. Ma and pa are very moral people, however, but I am somewhat of a backslider, and own up to taking a tippie once in a while myself."

"Do, eh?"

"Frequently—and fact is, I'm so glad to meet you, you old rascal, that if you wasn't so dused full, you know, I'd ask you to take a bitter now."

"Full be blowed! I'll join you'n—hic—minute. Come, let's take a drink!"

"But are you sure you can stand one?"

"Stand it certain. Where'll we go?"

"Well, only one. This is the last, remember. Come this way."

Thereupon the two men turned into a lager beer saloon from the sidewalk.

As they did so, "Tom, the Frog," who had remained an interested spectator upon the corner, suddenly buttoned his coat about him, and walked briskly away up the Bowery.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN GOUCHER'S DEN.

The saloon which the Englishman and the "roper" had entered was kept by a fat German, one of the non-inquisitive kind, and into it, a moment later, the two tipsy laboring men staggered.

The Englishman and the roper had seated themselves at a table, and were being furnished with beer.

To a second table, not far distant, the two detectives navigated, and as they dropped into chairs, Bridger threw a handful of loose coin on the board, and called loudly for two beers, and two ham sandwiches.

Bidding the drunken wharfmen to be less demonstrative the fat landlady proceeded to supply their wants.

The landlord, and his two customers at the other table, glanced at the two laboring men, but as they had subsided to sullen silence they evidently set them down as two "lushes," soon to be bounced.

As the landlord placed the beers before the "roper" and the Englishman, the latter, against the remonstrance of the "roper," paid for the liquid,

As he did so he carelessly exhibited a goodly roll of bills, which "Jack, the Fork," noted.

"And now, be the way," said the "roper," using the cockney drawl. "Hang it all! it's me, me friend, who's forgetting, now. Let me see—what is your first name?"

"Never mind that—hic—me friend," was the answer. "I'd rather not say, if it's the same to you. You see, I've had a trifle of ill-luck lately. Not broke—hic—but—but—"

"But what, me friend?"

"I'd—hic—between you and I, be willing to raise the wind in any sort of a half safe way."

This was spoken in a whisper.

"Then shake!" returned the "roper," grasping the tipsy man's hand in a very enthusiastic manner. "You are me friend, and I am yours. We've met be chance, 'tis true; but I have a noble racket on hand, and I'm thinkin' you'll find we've met just right. Pst! landlord, two beers."

The fat landlord waddled toward the table, bearing the fluid called for.

The drunken wharfmen near by were making some of the most hideous grimaces ever witnessed, to the amusement of the landlady, in their efforts at demolishing the sandwiches, but were withal, very quiet for "lushes."

In payment for the ordered beers "Jack, the Fork," tendered a crisp new ten-dollar bill.

The fat lager vender objected, eyed the bill suspiciously, and asked his patron if he had not smaller change.

"Oh—hic—blow the animated sausage!" exclaimed the Englishman, delving into his pockets. "Let me pay for it."

"Not at all. I always make it a rule to hold me end up as a gentleman," returned the "roper," grandly. "Can't you send that bill out to a bank, and have it changed?"

"Vell, if I must. I must," returned the clumsy beer vender, shambling away. "Here, Christina, go by de money proker on de corner and get shange."

Christina did as commanded by her liege lord, and soon returned with the required change.

In the interim the tipsy Englishman had ventured to inquire the nature of the "racket" proposed.

"When we drink our beer, and I get my change, I'll take you where you can see for yourself," returned the "roper."

"Soon after the two men quitted the saloon arm in arm, and "Jack, the Fork," led toward Christie street.

Two drunken laborers followed them.

"Did you notice that bill I gave the Dutchman?" asked the "roper."

"Yes, and—hic—he looked at it as if he thought it bad, me friend."

"And so it was."

"Then we'll be getting into trouble about it."

"Nonsense! I've passed a dozen of them to-day, and my pockets are lined with them now."

"Well—hic—me friend I'll tell you it's too dangerous a 'racket' to suit my taste."

"Bah! the bills are made from stolen government plates on stolen government paper. They are correctly numbered, and I defy the United States treasurer himself to say that they are not genuine."

"I'm afraid, me friend, you're flattering the goods too much."

"Not a bit of it. I've shoved over five thousand dollars of the stuff the past two months, and have never heard a squeal. And I've got to go around now for more."

"You don't—hic—sell it yourself, do you?"

"No, but I'll take you, me friend, where it's made."

"What's 'e percentage to be made on it?"

"Great; you get five dollars of the queer for every dollar you put out."

"Then, if I should put up five hundred—"

"You'd get twenty-five hundred, shove that, and so on to fortune."

By this time the two men had turned up Christie street and reached Delancy.

Dropping back to a safe distance, when they had learned the "racket" to which the "roper" was steering, the sleuth-hounds lost the further conversation of the twain.

For quite a distance to the eastward, on Delancy street, "Jack, the Fork," led his companion, and suddenly disappeared with him, in a hall-way adjoining a gloomy looking liquor store.

Throwing aside their drunkenness the detectives hastened briskly on, and in a minute more entered at the same door.

They found themselves in a dark and narrow hall-way, and at the foot of a pair of stairs.

The hum of voices came from the bar-room near, and from the floor above.

Looking to their pistols, they softly ascended the stair-way.

Reaching the floor above they perceived that they were in a dark hall-way, at the rear of which was built a neces-

sary apartment, whose broken door looked directly upon the street door and the stairway below.

The voices they had heard came from a room opposite the stair-way's head, where they stood.

An oblong peep-hole slide, such as are used to view offering customers by low gambling-dens, was placed in the center of the door of the room.

It did not fit snugly, and a broad ray of light that poured without showed that its broken edge afforded a crack through which the doings within might be observed.

To this crack the detectives approached.

The floor of the room within was carpetless.

In the room's center was a large, round table.

It was daubed all over with green ink-stains, as if the liquid had been spilled in the manufacture of bogus green-backs.

Upon it burned a lamp, and at its farther edge, facing the door, sat a large, bald-headed, gray-whiskered man, whom Bridger at once recognized as "Boss" Goucher, an old burglar whom he, aided by Hoffman and Scott, two of Chicago's most skillful detectives, had arrested two years before for robbing a store in that city.

The evidence, however, had not been sufficient to convict him, and having money to employ a shrewd lawyer, he was discharged.

He was very busily engaged in counting over, inspecting, and separating a huge pile of new bills.

So busy was he that he had not, as it seemed, looked up to notice that "Jack, the Fork," and his English friend had been permitted to enter the apartment by Mr. "Tom, the Frog," and that the three occupied seats at the table, observing his movements.

When he did finally notice their presence it was with a look of surprise that any one but himself was in the room.

"Blast such work!" he cried, suddenly, for he not only appeared to be full of business but in a rage.

As he spoke he tore a five-dollar bill angrily in two pieces, crumpled the discarded paper in his hands, and tossed the worthless wad directly in front of the stranger upon the table.

"Halloo!" he added, as if for the first noticing the presence of the tipsy Englishman, and "Jack, the Fork," "who have we here?—as they say in the theater."

"Wide-awakes of the right sort," returned the "roper."
"I have come to invest, and so has me friend."

Goucher nodded by way of recognition to the Englishman, then busied himself again.

"Jack, the Fork," picked up the wad which had once represented a new five-dollar bill.

He straightened out the pieces, laid them together, examined them carefully, and remarked:

"I don't see anything the matter with this bill. What's wrong with it?"

"Sharper eyes than yours might suggest that same question," returned Goucher. "However, the note is not exactly perfect, and I will permit nothing that might be anywhere detected to leave here."

The "roper" passed the torn bill to the Englishman, and he also examined it carefully.

"I don't—hic—see anything the matter with it," said he. and I'm a judge of the money of all nations. In fact, there's nothing the matter with it—it's a good bill!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Goucher, "I have here plenty that are better, although that might travel the land over without discovery. Now, how much of the stuff shall I roll up for you? One dollar buys five of it."

At this point, to the utter astonishment of the three "hawks," the Englishman abruptly pushed his chair back from the table and smiled quietly upon the men before him.

A look of intelligence passed between them, and then Goucher somewhat tartly demanded:

"Well, you came here prepared to buy, didn't you?"

"Yes—hic—I've got money."

"How much, then, of the stuff do you want?"

"All of that—hic—kind of stuff I can get at that price; but I've no particular use for bundles of saw dust and waste paper."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean—hic—that them notes are all good notes, and—hic—that you haven't got a bad bill in the house. You wouldn't take a trunkful of crooked money as a free gift! And the good, old, threadbare game's to roll up a lump of those—hic—bills, take the chump's—hic—money, change the package on him, and let him take away a roll of saw-dust or paper, which 'e police'd—hic—laugh at him for if he dared complain, which he dare not—"

"Well, if you're so 'fly,'" roared Goucher, "what the devil did you come here for?"

And the three "hawks" sprang to their feet and glared

at the smiling Englishman as if their intention was to wipe the floor with him.

"Easy men—hic—easy," said he, waving his hand as if bidding them to resume their chairs. "I am here on business."

"On business, eh?" demanded Goucher. "Who are you—a 'fly cop?'"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SAND-BAG.

"Not much!—hic—I hate a detective worse'n you do."

"Then, be quick! Explain your business."

"Sit down, me friends—hic—" returned the Englishman. "You fellows get mad so easy. Fact is, I don't—hic—member of fellows that get mad so easy as you do."

The room was close and warm, and as the man spoke the liquor which he had imbibed seemed to assert itself, and his head dropped forward upon his breast, as if he had fallen into a drunken stupor.

"I'll bet he's an escaped lunatic," exclaimed "Tom, the Frog."

"Bah!" sneered Goucher.

"We'll see what he's got about his clothes, anyway," quoth "Jack, the Fork."

And suiting his action to the word that enterprising worthy proceeded to deftly untomb the contents of the Englishman's pockets.

A large roll of bills, a gold watch, chain, and a pocket-wallet were transferred in a twinkling to a position upon the table.

Suddenly the Englishman revived, and, opening his eyes, perceived what was going on.

"Jack, the Fork," sprang aside and assumed an innocent air, while his intended victim clutched the pile of valuables before him.

"You were going to rob me, eh?" he exclaimed.

Nor did he appear so much intoxicated as before. "Nothing of the sort," quoth Goucher. "You had fallen into a drunken stupor—might have taken poison or something, and turned out a case for the morgue. We want to get into no trouble here, and were only looking through your pockets to establish your identity and learn where to send you."

"I'll find that out for myself, gentlemen," returned the Englishman, placing the watch in his pocket and retaining the roll of bills in his hand. "But it is evident that you hunger among you for this roll of bills. Now, mark me, you shall have them squarely if you'll do me one favor, and keep that favor 'dead.' "

"What is that, my man—take you back to the asylum?"

"Make no mistake, I'm not crazy—although I soon may be if I am not rid of a trouble which I have on my hands."

"What shape is it?"

"A man."

"A man, eh?"

"Yes, a seedy fellow who pretends to be my friend, and yet continues to follow me about everywhere."

"Well, why don't you shake him?"

"I can't; in fact, I don't want to do so either, if I thought he was square. I'm even willing to take money from the bank and set him up; but I've got it into my head that he's made up his mind to get me in some out-of-the-way place and kill me."

"It might be you only imagine so, or, as they say, are a little off your 'cabassa' through 'lushing' too much."

"Let that be as it will. We'll suppose that I state the thing straight. Now, then, if that man and I were traveling together—say upon a railway at night—might he not give me a thump on the head, rob me, dash me from the train, and no one be the wiser?"

"He might."

"And folks would naturally suppose that I fell off; for that's my idea of how he has planned it."

"Such cases doubtless have been," returned Goucher. "I have no doubt that in many cases where men have fallen off trains and been killed, if the real truth were known, there was some 'crooked' work. So it's pretty hard to tell, when a man is found dead near a railway, whether he's been thrown from the train or has fallen off through natural causes."

"Then there's my trouble. You see, this man might knock me thus from a train; and the thing seems so easy that, from watching his actions, I'm thinking he intends to do it."

"Do you carry much money with you?"

"I intend doing so, for I'm bound for Florida for the winter, and he knows it."

"Then don't carry the money, or else employ a detective to accompany you."

"That would be expensive, and would be insulting to a man whom I must consider my friend, unless he proves the truth of my fear, which, as you say, may be all fancy, for, in fact, I have been drinking too freely of late."

"Then what do you want of us?"

"A way to protect myself against assault if necessary."

"How can we aid you?"

"You are old hands—men who have done 'crooked' work. Pardon me for saying so, but I knew that the young man here was a 'steerer in' for just some such a game as you are playing. And so I followed him here—not so much intoxicated as I have seemed—and willing, as I now am, to leave this roll, containing five hundred dollars, in your hands. Briefly, then, I require a weapon by which I can defend myself if attacked, and I wish no testimony to exist if I have to use it, that I possessed it, or where I procured it."

"That's easy. You want to get a revolver, on the sly, I suppose?"

"Not a revolver. Something that will make no noise, and can be done away with so as not to be found."

"I have it!" exclaimed Goucher, arising from his chair, and going to the rear part of the room.

Soon after he returned and threw a heavy weapon upon the table which resembled, in appearance, a half-yard of fresh Bologna sausage.

"There," he said, "is a sand-bag, one rap from which, in a strong man's hands, would floor a bull. It is built especially for quiet work—work which, years ago, some of us were into."

"If you were to knock a fellow down with that," he continued, striking the weapon upon the table, "all you would have to do to destroy the evidence would be—well, say it was on a railway train. Go to the saloon in the corner of the car, undo this end of it, and pour the filling out through the aperture. They would, of course, distribute along the track, and be lost beyond tracing. Then you have only the bare bag left. It is made of tough canvas, saturated with spirits of turpentine, and covered with oiled silk. All you've got to do then is to light a match, set it on fire, and drop it through on the track. On the instant it will be aflame and the blaze will stick to it till it's burned to ashes and blown away. And if any passing track walker should see it burning he'd think it a piece of blazing waste from the engine, and give it no notice."

"That will suit me, then," said the Englishman, taking

the terrible weapon in his hand. "And now, let us understand each other. If I give you this roll of money you are to sell me this weapon to be used in my protection, are never to know or speak any more about it, and I am to be permitted to go my way hence without being assaulted or robbed?"

"The terms are suitable," returned Goucher, with a broad grin of approbation. "The bag contains the right quality of copper filings, just enough of 'em, and packed the right way for offense and defense; and it would be hard to find a man that would build a weapon of that character for little money. The five hundred will buy it, and supply ample 'hush,' though it's not likely that we, who've long since 'tied up prigging,' would 'squeal' on the transfer. So you take it from us on the quiet, and, as you've got it in your hands, you would seem to have the best of us, if we meant to assault or rob you. So make the 'cambia,' leave the 'cole,' take the implement, and go where you will in peace."

"Done!" said the Englishman, and tossing the roll of notes to Goucher, he placed the sand-bag in an inner pocket of his great-coat, and arose to his feet.

"I've only one thing more to say to you, my 'nazy cove,'" quoth Goucher. "And that is, you want to remember, at all times, that that thing is not a child's plaything. Keep it right along in your mind that a very slight knock from it will tumble a strong man, and a harsh blow with it would crack his skull, and kill him as dead as if a cannon ball struck him. You'll never hear from us, but don't you let us ever hear from you either."

"I am thankful to you," returned the Englishman, turning toward the door. "Mum is the word. I'll never have use for the thing unless assaulted, but I feel better since I possess a weapon that I may be able to resist with."

"I have accomplished what I came here for," he added, "and if you are satisfied open the door and let me go away."

At a motion from Goucher "Jack, the Fork," approached the door.

As he did so the two sleuth-hounds retreated softly to the cover of the apartment at the rear of the hall-way.

A moment later the bolt slid back, the door opened, and the Englishman stepped forth, descended the stair-way, and passed forth upon the street.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"I'M VAITIN' FOR IT! I VANT IT! I VANT IT!"

The two detectives would have followed the Englishman had not the three "hawks" stepped softly from the room to the baluster of the stair-way, peering after him until the door below had closed behind his departing form.

As it did so "Jack, the Fork," said, with a laugh:

"Well, ha! ha! ha! what is it? Has he got the monkeys—in—his—ears from over 'boosing?'—or is he a dead crank, and off because he is off?"

"Nix," returned Goucher; "that fellow's either a 'high-tober' himself after an 'elephant,' or he's in the employ of a 'king-gounoff.' "

"And that's my way of thinking," said "Tom, the Frog." "For the 'cocum bloke' knows a thing or two, and got what he wanted in a 'bene' way. He's had dealings with 'crooked' people before, and means murder—you can bet!"

"Well, he's got us on for nothing; let him go as he please," quoth Goucher. "And we've here his five hundred 'cases' to divide for a good day's work. Come in, and I'll whack."

As the door of the den closed and bolted behind the three "hawks," the street door opened softly, and a Polish Jew, with bright, twinkling little eyes, peered within the hall-way.

He was of the regular Baxter street type of old-clothes' men, and wore a full, tattered black beard.

A long, well-worn ulster of brown stuff covered his diminutive form, and a square, old-fashioned stiff hat sat low upon his frowzy head.

In his left hand he carried a glass jar wrapped about with brown paper.

His glance seemed to convince him that all was right, for entering the hall-way and closing the door behind him, he softly ascended the steps toward the room in which the proceeds of the sand-bag transaction were in process of division.

Pausing without the door he peered through the crack of the ill-fitting peep hole slide.

Convinced that matters stood as he desired, he rapped gently upon the door.

A moment later the slide opened, and Goucher's voice demanded :

"Who's there?"

"It was only me, Mr. Goucher," returned the Jew, removing his hat and bowing. "Vas it right—might I come in?"

"Yes," came the gruff answer.

The slide slid shut, and the bolt was heard to slide back.

While awaiting the opening of the door the Jew shook his right hand swiftly above his head in the manner peculiar to his class, and said, audibly, as if for his own gratification :

"I know you vant to sheat me. But you can't! You can't—you tief, you can't sheat Sammy Muggins."

But as the door opened his hat was again in his hand, and in the most serile manner he bowed, smiled, and scraped, saying, as he passed within :

"Vy, Mr. Goucher, you vas lookin' quite as bright as a dollar coin dis evening. And how vas Mr. Tom and Mr. Jack? Vy, I vas glad to see you all."

As the door banged to, and the bolt shot to its place, his greeting still continued within.

Softly leaving their nook of concealment, the detectives approached the crack in the door, as before.

"What have you got there?" demanded Goucher, pointing to the package which Sammy Muggins carried.

"It vas only cooking-butter, Mr. Goucher, vat I vas taking to Rachel, Moses' daughter, Mr. Goucher."

"And have you got anything for me?"

"No, Mr. Goucher—but if you have de money for de necklace I vould take it by Moses wid me."

"Well, it was the necklace 'wanted,' and I've got the money for you."

"How much, Mr. Goucher?"

"Two hundred dollars."

"Holy Moses, man! Vy, de diamonds separate might be pawned for more! Vy, vas not de reward by de advertisement for five hundred dollar?"

"That's wnat the advertisement offered."

"Vell, your share vas to be de half?"

"No, Sammy, we were to whack, half and half, after the 'fly-cops' had their 'commish.' They took one hundred and—"

"Von hundred!—vat a sheat!"

"Get out, you bloke! They would have given five hundred out of their own pockets to have set their 'glims' on

the 'fence' that took that necklace from the thief that 'nipped' it."

"Vy, did dey say de tief vas bad wanted?"

"Tom took the jewel around, and he can tell you."

"Vat did de 'fly-cops' say, Tom?"

"Well, all as I have to say is," returned Tom, "they were particular pressing about the health of the thief that 'turned the trick,' and they would have parted with a good 'boodle,' if I had named the 'fence.' "

"But you wouldn't do it, Mr. Tom? Vy, look how many tousand monies Moses puts in de vay ov you, and Mr. Goucher, and Mr. Jack."

"It's all right. Here's your money. Clear out, and no more gab. Tell Moses that everything's solid."

As Goucher spoke he tossed a roll of money upon the table, and toward the Jew.

At this moment the door below again softly opened, and the two sleuth-hounds hastened to their work in the rear of the hall-way.

A second Jew, resembling the first in form and feature, but a shade better dressed and more erect, stood in the hall-way holding the door open, and peering upward.

An instant later the door of the den opened, and the first Jew bowed his way out.

"It vas all right, Mr. Goucher, all right," he said. "I would go right away by Moses. Good-by to you all, shen-telmens!"

But as the door slammed shut in his face, and the bolt was placed again, he shook his hand above his head as before, and gave vent to a torrent of execrations in Hebrew against the villains within.

As he did so the Jew below uttered a low:

"Hist!"

Peering over the baluster, Sammy Muggins answered with another:

"Hist!"

"Vas dat you, Sammy?" asked the Hebrew below.

"Yes, Moses. Vait, I come quick down."

And Sammy Muggins shambled hastily down the stair-way.

"Vere vas you all de vile to-day, Sammy? I vas ashamed by you," quoth Moses Muggins, as the two brothers met in the hall-way.

"I vas over by Polinski's house by Staten Island all day, Moses—vy?"

"Vy, I could not think vat keep you. Somedimes I tinks

you got de money of Goucher, and vent away vid it. I have just come to ask of it."

"You vas foolish, Moses. You know I not do such ting."

"Vell, Sammy be quick about it. Did you get de money for de necklace?"

"Yes; here it vas."

And Sammy delivered the roll which Goucher had given him.

"How much vas it?"

"Catch your veight on de door, Moses, and don't fall dead ven I tell you."

"Be quick, Sammy, how much?"

"Two hundred dollar."

"Two hundred dollar! My eyes, it was for five hundred advertised! Such tiefs vould yet ruin us!"

"De 'fly-cops' took von hundred commission."

"Nonsense, but ve could not do better. Vat is dat you have in de bundle?"

"Badent butter," and as he spoke Sammy Muggins removed the paper from the glass jar, and Moses looked at the commodity in it.

"Badent butter? Vat you mean by dat?"

"Vell, ven I say badent butter, Moses, I mean someding."

"Vell, be quick. Vat you mean vid such nonsense?"

"I mean, Moses, it vas a fortune. Ve could make prime butter as sheap as mud."

"Who told you dese tings? I see you vas veak here," and Moses touched his forehead suggestively. "Vat kind of beer is it now sold in Staten Island?"

"Vait, Moses. I drink no beer. A Polish man, soon from Turkey, stays now vid our friend Polinski by Staten Island."

"Vell?"

"Vell, Polinski say to him I was brother of Moses Muggins vat keeps a business in New York, and I should speak vid you of dat butter."

"How vas dat butter made?"

"Visper, Moses. You vouldn't give it away?"

"Sure not."

"Vell, visper! Twenty-five drops of concentrated Turkish rat poison, dropped in a barrel of ordinary kerosene oil vould curdle up and change de whole business into solid vite butter like dat. Ve could take de man into de house, Moses, give him fifty cents a day, and half of de dog's meal, till ve find out all about it, den kick him out on de street."

"But vat good would be dat butter?"

"Vat good would be dat butter, Moses? Vait, vat you tink, vid ordinary boarding-house butter, in de vinter time, at one dollar de pound. It would revolutionize de business. Vid kerosene at ten cents a gallon, and Turkish rat poison sheap as street mud, ve have a prime, genuvine article of butter at two cents a pound. Everybody would buy. Vat more do you vant?"

"But it would be poison butter."

"Vait, Moses, vait. De Turkish rat poison kills de taste of de kerosene. De kerosene kills de poison of de Turkish rat poison. Vait. To-day we tried it on three cats, von dog, and von hog. De cats vent to sleep avile, de dog hide away a few minutes, but de hog, whose stomach vas most like de man, he grunt for more of de butter. And vait, Moses. De hog vat boarded in de next pen, he only smelled it ven he sticks up his snoot like dis, just as if he wanted to say ven he grunted: 'Give me some. I vant some. I'm vaitin' for it. I vant it! I vant it!'"

Sammy Muggins' enthusiasm over the patent butter scheme, at this point, brought him to grief.

Goucher's burly bartender, enraged at the noisy conversation in the hall-way, had slipped from a side-door from the bar-room in the rear of Moses and Sammy.

Moses still held open the door, and Sammy stood facing the street near him.

So soon as the bartender perceived that Sammy Muggins was the author of the noise in the hall-way he made a rush for him.

At first, as Sammy, with body bent over, and upturned features, in describing the eagerness of the hog to obtain a taste of the butter, had squealed out: "I'm vaitin' for it! I vant it! I vant it!" the bartender delivered him a tremendous kick upon the bent portion of his frame, which sent him flying through the door-way, and upon the sidewalk without.

A lamp-lighter had just succeeded in lighting a street lamp on the opposite side of the street as Sammy staggered to his feet.

"Fire! De city vas on fire!" he shrieked, and dashed wildly off toward the Bowery.

On the instant a fat policeman passed the door on a dog-trot, brandishing his club, and calling out to the running man to stop.

This had only the effect of making the bewildered Jew run the faster.

The policeman's advent, however, restrained the burly bartender, who had turned as if to assault Sammy's astounded and trembling brother.

But Moses, thinking that the bartender had suddenly recognized him as the rich "fence" who had had frequent dealings with Goucher, smiled in his terror, and pretended to join in the joke at Sammy's expense.

"I am Moses Muggins," he said. "I do business wid Mr. Goucher. It vas quite right to remind Sammy not to make so much noise. Ha, ha! he wanted it, and he wanted it! Vell, he got it—didn't he, Mr. Bartender?"

"Yes, and you'll be gettin' a dose of it, too," thundered the bartender, "if you don't be makin' yourself scarce. For, whoever you be doin' business wid, mind yer, yer don't want ter be blowin' yer bazzoos in this hall-way!"

Having thus demonstrated his authority, the "tumper" strode away with a Mose stride, and disappeared whence he came.

Extending the palms of his hands, raising them over his head, and shaking them to and fro with the energy of a steam-engine, Moses Muggins invoked a string of curses, in Hebrew, upon the autocrat of the bar, and then suddenly wheeling about, vanished upon the street.

The Scotch detective and Bridger softly descended the stair-way, assured that they had gained clews that promised to be of great value in their quest. It was dark when they emerged upon the street, and they perceived, to their dismay, that the Muggins brothers had passed from view.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TRACING THE NECKLACE CLEW.

"If it should prove that this sand-bag man is the 'Squealer' and that the companion he spoke of is Alfonse Godot that which we have found points to nothing short of Videre's determination to murder Alfonse," said the Scotch detective, as the two sleuth-hounds hastened toward the Bowery.

"If you think that," returned Bridger, "we should have given that man the collar at all hazards, to-day."

"But you forget, Bobe, I uever saw Videre, and although the man's features tally somewhat with the picture of the 'Squealer' in the Rogues' Gallery in London, and his squeaking voice and dealing with 'crooked' people point toward Videre, still no absolute evidence can exist against

him until we have found 'Silly' Billy, Meg Bolard, and Annette."

"Then we must first look up the game of these two Jews."

The Scotch detective acquiesced, and on reaching the Bowery, Bridger led to a drinking saloon where a file of the *Herald* was kept.

Glancing at the "Reward" column the two detectives read the following notice in the issue of the day previous :

\$500. —A reward of five hundred dollars will be paid, and no questions asked, for the prompt return of a red Russian-leather jewel-case, containing a diamond necklace.

BOWER DETECTIVE AGENCY, — Broadway.

Half an hour later the Scotch detective and Bridger entered the detective agency, whose number was attached to the advertisement.

The principal of the firm, a short, squarely built man, with keen, blue eyes, curly hair, and blonde mustache, sat alone at his desk.

Introducing the Scotch detective and himself as detectives, Bridger referred to the notice concerning the necklace, and asked if it would be adverse to the business interests of the agency to say in what manner the jewel had been lost.

"By no means," the detective returned. "I will gladly give you the information. It was taken from the person by a garroter."

"From whom?"

"From one A. W. Walton, a gentleman resident in New Orleans."

"Was the robbery committed in New York?"

"Yes."

"Garroters generally travel three in a gang—is Mr. Walton positive that there was only one thief?"

"The theft was committed by one man—a tall, smooth-faced, powerful fellow."

"Could Mr. Walton identify the thief?"

"He could not—the man's actions were so swift. But it is easy to see, gentlemen, that you have recently been working outside of New York city, or you would know that a general order has been issued to the New York force to keep a vigilant watch for 'an adroit footpad, tall, clean shaven, and swift-footed, who had succeeded in committing a number of the most daring robberies from the

person, escaping on each occasion so as to leave no further clew to his identity.' "

"Then it would be a fine feather in a sleuth-hound's cap to capture this thief?"

"Well, I should smile! Between us all, I offered the fellow who brought in the necklace five hundred out of my own pocket to give away even the 'fence' he got it from."

"Then it was not the 'fence' himself who brought it."

"Look here, old boy, you know it was a 'go between' who brought it."

"Well, would it be too much to ask who the 'go-between' was?"

"Yes, as matters stand, I think that would be a little too much kindness to give away. The necklace, however, was the second article brought to us by the same 'go-between' in answer to reward notices inserted by our firm, and originally stolen by this skillful highwayman."

"Might it not be possible that this 'go-between' deals directly with the thief?"

"To our certain knowledge he does not."

"Please explain."

"Well, in the first place this 'go-between' is an ex-thief, who, with others, is working a safe confidence game. He is doing nothing now that will put him in danger of looking through the bars, and every New York 'fence' knows that it is safe to trust him, for pay, to deliver stolen goods and collect the reward. He also knows that he is safe in coming here, for it is an accommodation to us, our customers, and our business."

"Then suppose I was to name this 'go-between,' would you inform us if I have done so correctly?"

"No, gentlemen, you ask too much. We have an expensive office here, and must live."

"Then if we were to say that we not only know and can name this 'go-between,' but the 'fence' and the thief—what would you say to that?"

"If you will name the three I will inform you if you have hit on the right 'go-between,' providing you give me your word that you will use the information privately."

"That is understood—but now you ask too much. I'll tell you what we'll do—we'll do even better for you than this."

"What?"

"If this thief might be taken, and commit no further robberies, then your interest in him narrows down to your two customers who have been his victims?"

"Just so."

"Well in that case, if you were assured that these losses, including rewards paid, and your commissions, would be paid in full—you would be happy?"

"Right you are!"

"Then, to make a long story short, we want this highwayman for what he knows about a murder, and are so close on his heels that we know the 'fence' he is dealing with. We have reason to believe that this 'fence' has driven him to the commission of these robberies, and is, therefore, himself the real criminal. This 'fence' is rich, and we give you our word as officers that we will find him, and that when we do we will place in his hands such bills as you may prepare, and his choice to at once cover in the amount to your office or go to trial. That is if you will name this 'go-between.' "

"On those conditions I will do so."

"Then he was no other than one of the two men who are working the 'sawdust racket' in company with 'Boss' Goucher, and either Tom or Jack?"

"'Tom, the Frog,' it was."

"That is all we want to know. Make out your bills, and we will see that they are paid."

Bower wrote out an itemized account of the losses of the office's two customers, who had been robbed by the unknown garroter, making the full amount twelve hundred and fifty dollars.

"To that please add," said the Scotch detective, "the sum of one thousand dollars lost to the same thief by Dr. Macy, a gentleman whose case we ourselves have in hand. And when the money is paid you will at once inform us by placing the one thousand dollars claimed in the hands of the proprietor of the St. Nicholas Hotel, to be delivered to Dr. Macy, who is living there."

"And if the amount is not covered back to us?"

"We promise to call again, and bring funds to cover your bill."

"And now," said Bridger, glancing at his watch, "we have some brisk work before us to-night, and must be going."

"I am glad you called, gentlemen," quoted Detective Bower, giving the hands of the two sleuth-hounds a parting shake, "and will at once notify our customers of the prospect of recovering their losses."

"I see, boys," he added, "that you are shielding the footpad, and are on a stealthy hunt for heavy game. If I can

aid you in any way—call at any time—myself and men will be at your service.”

“That diamond necklace clew has proved to be first water,” said the Scotch detective as the two sleuth-hounds descended from the agency to the street.

“Ay,” returned Bridger, “for there is no longer a doubt that the Muggins brothers know of the whereabouts of ‘Silly’ Billy, Meg Bolard, and Annette.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHAT THE BLUE SHIRTS BROUGHT FORTH.

The two sleuth-hounds repaired at once to the Bond street rooms, and made a complete change of apparel from Bridger’s amply filled trunks.

Leaving off the long hair, the descriptions of two famous scouts, well known to American story readers, convey an idea of the relative forms of Bridger and the Scotch detective.

Bridger was a counterpart both in nerve and form to ‘Wild Bill,’ but, unlike him, was a blonde.

The Scotch detective, with his gentlemanly appearance and manners, somewhat resembled “Buffalo Bill.”

Although Bridger was a trifle the heavier man of the two his clothes were well suited to the form of the Scotch detective.

While the two sleuth-hounds were dressing, Bridger’s landlady rapped on the door, and delivered the Scotch detective’s mail, which had arrived from Washington in answer to his telegram.

It contained advice from Scotland Yard which left no room to doubt that Pere Videre, accompanying Alfonse Godot, had sailed for America.

The two detectives were now assured that the sand-bag man, of Goucher’s den, was no other than Pere Videre, and that he had purchased the terrible weapon to put Alfonse Godot out of his way.

Videre, skilled in crime, had doubtless deceived his sick companion into a belief that he was his friend, and would aid in the quest for his daughter.

He had doubtless found means to keep Alfonse so unwell as to be unable to seek the British Consul in person for information concerning Dr. Macy’s whereabouts.

This Videre had volunteered to do for him.

He had also found means to obtain the deceived man's consent to the journey toward Florida, the consumptive's winter rest.

On the way thither he had planned to murder him, and thus end his claim to the estates of his father.

No time was to be lost.

The men must be found.

If they left New York together the chances were that another murder case would be on the hands of the two sleuth-hounds.

They therefore determined to search the hotels of the city at once for the two men.

When they again descended to the street the two detectives were clothed as gentlemen, save in one particular.

In their haste they had failed to change their under-clothing, and still wore the blue flannel shirts.

The night was cool, however, and they kept their overcoats buttoned snugly at the neck, hiding the shirts from the eyes of the fastidious.

Little did they dream that the entire success of their night's work depended on those blue shirts.

Hastening first to the St. Nicholas Hotel, they reported the progress made to Dr. Macy, and after cheering up the old gentleman with hopeful promises, entered a cab and began their round of New York's principal hotels.

They examined the registers and questioned the clerks in every hotel where a well to-do foreigner might be likely to put up, but all of no avail whatever.

At midnight, as they were driving along in Sixth avenue, the Scotch detective said:

"I feel, Bobe, as if we were on a fool's errand to-night."

"How so?"

"We are not following an English gentleman, but an English thief. Of course Videre does not know that the London force have had eyes on him in England."

"No, or he would not be here."

"Then rely on it, Bobe, he will make a serpentine trail, hard to follow, and has stopped privately with his sick dupe."

"You strike the nail fair on the head, I believe," said Bridger. "And it is beyond the hour to-night when we might call upon private lodging-houses."

"Undoubtedly."

"What, then?"

"Throw up the job for the night, and let us eat, for I'm as hungry as a wolf."

"I'm with you, for, come to think, Christina's ham sandwiches have only broken our fast since breakfast."

Opening the cab's door the Scotch detective ordered the cabman to drive to a restaurant.

"What one?" asked the driver.

"Any one where a first-class meal is served."

Soon after the cab drew up before a somewhat pretentious restaurant, upon whose cut-glass windows was displayed the sign: "English Chop House."

Dismissing the cabman the two sleuth-hounds entered, to find themselves in a cozy and somewhat aristocratic dining-room.

They perceived that several sprigs of Gotham's nobility who were at the time dining within, glanced toward them, as if they were entering the realms of a class to which they did not belong.

As they seated themselves at one of the tables they noticed also that the waiter was slow in approaching them, and that he eyed them suspiciously as he presented the bill of fare.

They ordered two porterhouse steaks, and that turtle soup and coffee be served them at once.

As the waiter departed to fill their order the proprietor of the place made a cautious tour in their neighborhood, eying them as if he considered their custom at the best not to be desired.

They perceived also that although the sign without presented the legend, "English Chop House," the landlord was, in fact, a portly German.

Bridger and the Scotch detective were not men who would tamely endure insult, and their eyes began to snap wickedly.

As the proprietor approached them a second time the Scotch detective demanded, in a voice that commanded the attention of all in the room:

"Are you the proprietor of this place?"

"Yes, sir," was the answer.

"Well, have you lost a gold mine, or any other small article, where we are sitting?"

"Sir, I do not understand vat you mean."

"Nor I what you mean by your suspicious looks. We have ordered what we desire from your bill of fare, and go you and see that our order is hurried up."

"And remember," added the angry detective, "if you return, with your insulting demeanor, to this vicinity again during our stay, I will make it my business to take you by

the arm, and drum into your head a proper method toward a gentleman who may, through accident, enter your place."

The fat landlord reddened in embarrassment, and was about to stammer forth an explanation, when the cause of the misunderstanding suddenly dawned upon Bridger, and he roared in laughter.

The two sleuth-hounds had neglected, on entering, to button their overcoats at the neck, and the blue shirts had subjected them to the unusual scrutiny which they had experienced.

"Sir," said Bridger, "you will overlook the anger of my friend, when we inform you that we have been so busy since sunrise this morning, that we have been, to a degree, thoughtless in matters of dress. A blue shirt, though honest, I know, is not suited to the surroundings, but men in our line wear all sorts of shirts, and sometimes no shirts at all."

As Bridger spoke he displayed his badge.

When the fat landlord perceived that his guests were detectives his sorrow that he had been so imprudent as to give them cause for anger, was evident, and his apologies were heartfelt and profuse.

"Ve have often such unbleasant things in dis business vat you vould not believe," he said, "and somedimes it git me tired I vas outside my own soul. Vrequently comes in decent mechanics, but because flashy, cheap chop houses gives quality and price unreasonable small, vill make a kick at vat ve sharge. Nein, I begrudge no man his stomachful, but only I vould avoid droubles."

So saying he hastened away, and hurried up the waiter, who in a moment returned bearing the turtle soup and coffee.

The two detectives had buttoned their coats to hide the blue shirts, but the Scotch detective was still angry, and sat moodily sipping the food.

Noticing this the fat landlord again approached to renew his apologies.

Beginning by inquiring if the soup suited, he continued:

"Yes, I have frequently much droubles, and find dat I must keep dings to suit de fancy of dose beoples vat batronize me most, and whose ideas of mankindt vas government by de dress vat he vears. By de vay, vor eggssample, a quite funnv thing vat dakes place shust three nights ago I could give you. Business vas dull, and vas only von customers in de blace. He was an English shentlemans

vat talks mit a strange, piccolo, high-pitch voice his orders."

At this point the Scotch detective's manner changed, and he looked up pleasantly toward the loquacious host, which seemed to encourage the German to continue.

"Vell," continued the landlord, "burty soon comes in, quite boldly, a thin man vat look as if he vas bad gonsumpted. He vas quite good dressed, and walked to a dable, vile his gontinued, gonfounded hicchew cough seems at vonce to make de English shentlemans mad."

"Was he a friend of the English gentleman?" asked the Scotch detective.

"No, I know he vas strange to each other. But dot English shentlemans eat mit me often pefore, and I fear me dot man vould insult him mit his hicchew cough. But, ven I think of it, dat bad gonsumpted man vas de cratest owner of cheek—genuvine touble-plated, copper bottomed, iron-riveted cheek vat I ever smelt. For he vas all berfumed up bleasantly mit—vat you call it—night-howling-serious berfume, and wore such law-de dock kid gloves.

"Well, yelled out dot bad gonsumpted man to de vaiter:

"Hic-chew! hic-chew! Vaiter!"

"I vas half in a doze, und I vake up to think de cook vas cutting mit his saw a bone.

"Ven de vaiter come dot bad gonsumpted man points to de dable, and say:

"Hic-chew! May I sit here, vaiter?"

"Sure,' de vaiter said. 'Vat should I serve you?"

"And he hands dot bad gonsumpted man bill of fare.

"Vell, mit a couple of dose hic-chews he glanced by it, and say to de vaiter:

"Hic—chew! Might I have anydings vat I shoose vat is here?"

"Sure, of course,' said de vaiter, vile I say to myself dot bad gonsumpted man vas some quiet, modest country shentlemans vat knows not de vay of business in New York.

"Hic-chew! You vas very kind,' he then said. 'So I vould say a blate of nice chicken soup—hic-chew!—to begin mit.'

"And dis he said should be followed by speckled trout—vorth two dollars a piece—filet de turbot a la Holandaise venison, Creole style, and apple fritters a la maitre du hotel.

"Vell, good cracious! vat have I caught?' dat's vat I

think. 'Sure de man must be a Nevada silver-king, a country senator, or somedings.'

"Vell, pefore be vatier got yet away from him he says :

"'Hic-chew ! Vaiter, I vould ask you, dere vas no danger by fire by dis building, vas it?'

"'No, sir,' de vaiter said.

"'Vell, I only wanted to—hic-chew!—know,' dot bad gonsumpted man said.

"Vell, ven he had de soup half done, he squeels owed :

"'Hic-chew ! vaiter, a bottle of your finest glaret vine.'

"And ven he eats up his dinner he squeels out once more :

"'Hic-chew ! vaiter, a pint bottle of champagne !'

"Vile he sips de champagne he says to de vaiter :

"'Hic-chew ! vaiter, I vould tell you now, you could in abowed dree seconds send for an officer.'

"'Vat kind of an officer?' vas vat de vaiter asked him.

"'Hic-chew ! De usual kind—a boliceman,' he said.

"'A boliceman !' cried out de vaiter, and so did de English shentelmans, vat all de vile vonder to see a man vat could eat a dinner vorth fifteen dollars and a half.

"'Hic-chew ! a policeman,' repeated dot bad gonsumpted man, very quietly.

"'Vat you vant it for?' cried de vaiter, crowing right away grazzy on his feet, vile de English shentleman's eyes stick out like goose eggs mit surprise, and my heart pegins to chump up agin my prains.

"'Hic-chew ! To take me up,' he said.

"'Dake you up !' spoke de vaiter, vile he proke a new soup blate over de head of his astonishment.

"'Hic-chew !' vas de quite cool, airy, Coney Island, Rock-away, sea-breeze answer. 'But I don't insist you should do so—only I vould inform you, I vould go right away owed ven I end my champagne.'

"'Vell, sir, your bill vill be made owed in shust von minute,' said de vaiter.

"'I vould not doubt you,' dot bad gonsumptive man says, vile he sips de vine shust like he own de vurld. 'But it wouldn't be paid in von minute, shust de same. De fact vas, I don't got any money.'

"Vell, de English shentlemans half chumped up on his own dable, and I vent back so quick mit discouragement, de shair dipped and throws me almost through de bartition, vile de vaiter yell out like he vas mad :

"'Here ! Mr. Bergen ! Here ! Mr. Bergen !'

"So soon I could get myself together, and make myself

believe I vas live in de nineteen century, and in de State and gounty of New York, I comes vorvard, vorse mad as twenty Spanish pull fighters.

“‘Vat vas dis matter here?’ I roar owed, so you could hear de vedder-vane rattle mit de shimney overhead.

“‘Dis shentlemans have no money,’ said de vaiter, drembling like a dog chewing bones, in fear he should be discharged for vaiting on him.

“‘Vat!’ I say, ‘you vant do dole me you lose your money?’ and I make up my eyebrows like two mad cats’ dails.

“‘Hic-chew! Oh, no,’ said dot bad gonsumpted man, bulling on his kid gloves shust like a lady. ‘No, no; I assure you, sir, I did not have any money ven I come here.’

“‘And you vant do dole me,’ I cried, mit my fists doubled savage forward—‘you vant to dole me, you miserbale, gonsumpted, von-lung, hic-chew thief, you eat of me fifteen dollar and half delecatecons, and had no money to pay mit?’

“‘Hic-chew! There! there!’ he said, vile he pushed his fingers shently into de gloves; ‘I have not gonblained of your sharges. Dey vas, in fact, very reasonable. I had expected de bill would be at least twenty dollar.’

“Vell, if Saint Baterick’s gathedral dropped on me, I could not veel vorse baralyzed.

“My vind vent away gombpletely ven he gomplimended de reasonable brice, and for sixteen minutes I couldn’t speak above a visper.

“But all de vile I vas making my mind vedder I should fire him over de ash-cart by de street or ask him to smoke a fifty cent cigar, and sweep de floor mit him.

“To make the matter more gomblicated, de English shentlemans spoke mit me, for he saw swift death chumping up and down from my eyes.

“‘Don’t be hasty mit de shentlemans,’ he said. ‘De shentleman might only be a little eggseptrick. Let me speak a vord mid him.’

“So he takes a twenty-dollar bill owed of his pocket, and vispers do de gonsumptive man:

“‘Sir, such things might happen even Ghay Gould ven he might be skylarkin’ owed late at night. Eggsept, I would beg, de ineggsificant loan of twenty dollar from a stranger.’

“And vid dat he slips de bill into dot bad gonsumpted man’s hand,

"I could not now know scarcely vat I vas abowed in my own place.

"Ah, thank you!—hic-chew!" said dot bad gonsumpted man.

"You seem troubled mit de fewmony?" said de English shentlemans.

"Yes, ah!—hic-chew—hic-chew—yes," he said.

"So I should believe," I vispered.

"Ven I said so dot bad gonsumpted man stands up mit de twenty dollar bill in his hand, shust as crate as if he was a bolice shudge, and I vas a miserable drunk vaitin' to get ten days.

"Sir—hic-chew!" he said. 'Vat you have insulted me by galling me a thief, may be true, but it is shust bossible, you might yet vind owed I was a shentleman. I would vonce more in gonsequence by dot, ask you to back your obinions, and send right away for a boliceman of yo still think I vas a thief like vat yo have said.'

"It vas all right," I vispered, shust as if I vas sinking all de vile through de floor. 'I know all de vile you vas a shentlemans, and would pay me—if not do night, some odder night.'

"I might—hic-chew—yes, I might," he said, blacing de twenty dollar bill in his bocket. 'But, remember—hic-chew—I don't say I vill. So, since you have teclined do send by dot bolicemans, vy—hic-chew—ve bart on derms more vorthy of shentlemens. Good-night, sir. Good-night, sir.'

"And, bowing to de English shentlemans, he puts his hat sideways by his head, and valks dovard de door.

"He stops by de vindow, smells de flowers, and says:

"Hic-chew! Vat fragrant flowahs!"

"He then vent owed.

"It vas more I could quite stand, and if de vaiter had not himself fell over against me, ve both fell sure down.

"De English shentleman laughed owed a loud, squeaking laugh, vich vent vorse by my ears as twenty dom gats singing on a hot night, soon by, ven I vas dead mit de headache.

"De English shentleman pays his bill, and vent away quick after dot bad gonsumpted man.

"It vas yet two hours to dree o'clock, ven I should shut my blace, but I turn de glock right away by dree o'clock, and vent home.

"I put a mustard blastor on my pack, made my vife wrap a vet dowel by my neck, and go do ped.

"Next day ven I dells a shentlemans oof dot bad gonsumpted man, he said he vas vonce a story-book writer.

"Dot vas vat makes me at vonce sicker.

"But I bractice mit poxing-cloves, and a vrozen meat gargass in de kitchen, and if Vildemers J. St. Clair comes vonct more he could look owed."

"Has the English gentleman been in your place since?" asked the Scotch detective, as the German ended his story.

"Two dimes—do-night, abowd six and a half o'glock, de last dime."

"Do you know where he lodges?"

"Right away, come—I could show you."

The fat landlord led to a window, and continued:

"You see dot house vere burns de street-lamp in front de steps? Vel, up dose steps keeps a lady a very fine, brivate lodgings house, and sends me much customer. And, by dot house, de English shentlemans sleep all de vile."

The two sleuth-hounds thanked the landlord for the information he had given them, paid their bill, and departed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE KING OF ALL SLEUTH-HOUNDS.

Directing their steps toward the fashionable lodging-house opposite, the detectives perceived that although a light dimly burned in the hall-way, all within seemed to have retired for the night.

They at once set the door-bell ringing at full pitch.

In response a window above them, on the second floor, flew up with a bang, and a female who proved to be the landlady, popped forth her night-cap covered head, and demanded:

"Who's there?"

"Two detectives, madam," returned Bridger.

"Mercy on us! What do you want?"

"We wish to learn of two gentlemen who have had rooms with you for some days—one a tall, reddish-whiskered man, talking in a squeaking voice, and the other a thin, dark-eyed man, and afflicted with a lung disease."

"Mercy on us! And have they done any crime? Indeed, I thought there was something mysterious about those men. And dear, oh, me! a poor woman keeping apartments to let in this wicked city can't feel safe at any

time as to what villains might get into them. Were they murderers, thieves, defaulters, or—”

“Are these men in your house now?”

“Oh, dear, no, sir. Thank Heaven, both went away to-night.”

“At what time?”

“At half-past seven.”

“Taken their baggage away and left for good, eh?”

“Oh, yes. They only had a trunk and two hand-satchels, and they took them with them upon the hack.”

“Do you know where they went?”

“No, sir; they were careful to say little to me.”

“You thought there was something mysterious about these persons, madam—tell us what you mean by that? Were they not friendly to each other?”

“I cannot say that they were unfriendly, but I will tell you all I know of them, and let you judge for yourselves. Just one week ago to-day they came here. I was summoned to the door, and found awaiting me the red-bearded Englishman, while the cab stood at the curb. He said that he had barely arrived from Europe, had seen my house mentioned in a pamphlet containing a list of fashionable boarding-houses on shipboard, and desired apartments for himself and for his companion who was a consumptive. He said they were bound to Florida, and desired quiet rooms to rest from their sea-voyage. I showed him a suite of two bedrooms and a parlor, which he at once engaged for a week, paying me in advance. I asked his name, and after a moment's hesitation he said his name was Thompson, and that the sick man was his brother. He had a fire continually in the parlor, and remained much of the time indoors. The dark-haired sick man could barely speak above a whisper, and did not once quit the apartment from his coming until his going to-night. He ate but little, although the strong man frequently had splendid meals sent to his room, and the parlor table is, even now, covered with grapes, oranges, and all kinds of fruits, bottles of brandy, wine, beer, cakes, and even candies—showing that the invalid's appetite had been tempted in every way by the strong man.”

“But you have not explained why you looked upon them as mysterious people.”

“Oh, the poor invalid seemed to be so unhappy, and I sometimes thought was fearful of his companion, who seemed to hold control over him. At times, too, the servants overheard what seemed to be quarreling between the

two, as if the sick man considered himself imposed upon. But these quarrels always ended by assurances and promises on the strong man's part, the meaning of which the servants did not learn."

"And yet the sick man never complained or spoke to you concerning his affairs?"

"Never. Indeed he never had an opportunity to speak to me, or any one, save in presence of the strong man, and on account of the watch which he continually kept over the invalid, and their seeming quarrels, I mistrusted that something was wrong between them."

"Well, we are certainly sorry to discommode you so late at night, but rest assured that we will in no way call your house into public prominence because a man wanted by the law has lived here for a time."

"Oh, thank you, sir. For it would hurt my business; don't you think so?"

"But we would ask you, madam, to permit us to look at the rooms lately vacated by the two men, that we may see if anything has been left behind, which might lend a clue to their present whereabouts."

"Certainly. I will be below in an instant and let you in."

A moment later the landlady, a neat little New England woman of middle age, appeared at the door, and admitted the detectives.

The search revealed that everything had been removed from the apartments recently occupied by the mysterious lodgers save the furniture and those fruits, bottles, etc., of which the landlady had spoken.

The fire in the grate had died away, and as the two sleuth-hounds were about turning away, Bridger picked from the dead coals a half-consumed wad of yellow paper.

It proved to be an envelope of a class used by ticket agents to inclose railway tickets, and bore upon it the address of a railway ticket agency on Broadway.

Thanking the landlady for her kindness the two detectives hastened from the house.

They well knew that the ticket agency would be closed, but they found the night watchman at the number indicated, and from him learned that the agent was a single man, and lodged at a certain hotel.

Hailing a passing cab they drove to this hotel at once, and the clerk succeeded in routing the agent from his slumbers.

He remembered the man described as Videre, and had sold such a person two tickets to Jacksonville, Florida, via

the Pennsylvania Railroad, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington.

A train left at eight P. M. via that route, and he supposed the man and his companion had taken that train.

"We will now call to our aid the king of all sleuth-hounds," said Bridger, as the two detectives drove to the nearest all-night telegraph office.

"Ay," returned the Scotch detective, "Professor Morse and his electric wires have captured more thieves and murderers than can be computed, and deserve well to be called so."

Had the mysterious voyagers continued upon the eight P. M. train they were due to reach Baltimore one hour from the moment the two sleuth-hounds entered the telegraph office.

They might have stopped off at Philadelphia.

In Philadelphia lived Miles Barclay, in Baltimore Joel Parkman, two shrewd detectives, intimate friends of Bridger, who might be relied upon to lend their aid with alacrity at his appeal.

He telegraphed Barclay to find out if the parties "wanted" had stopped off in Philadelphia, and to hold them if they had.

A second dispatch to Parkman bade him search the train on its arrival at Baltimore, and hold the parties if found.

An hour later came a telegram from Parkman, saying that he had searched the train at the Baltimore depot, and had found no such people on board.

Soon after came a dispatch from Barclay, saying that he could find no trace of the men "wanted" in Philadelphia, and that they had certainly not stopped off in that city.

On receiving these telegrams Bridger was puzzled.

Spreading a railway map upon the counter in the telegraph office, he asked the Scotch detective's opinion.

"The railways and the wires you must work yourself, for you know the country best," said the Scotch detective. "But of one thing rest assured—Videre has made known, or has attempted to make known, his coming and arrival to Bolard, of whose death he is doubtless in ignorance. And since he has determined to rid himself of Alfonse Godot's claims, his plan must also extend to Annette and Dr. Macy. He has therefore attempted to inform Bolard of the danger threatening the estate he holds in England, and instructed him to join him at some point, possibly in company with Annette."

"Taking that view, which is a sound one," returned

Bridger, "it is possible that Videre altered his course at Philadelphia, and is now traveling westward upon the connecting train of the Pennsylvania Central."

At that moment the operator received a second dispatch from Barclay to Bridger.

It read :

"Have found that a man answering the description of the Englishman purchased two tickets for Cincinnati, and is on Penn. Central train, now west of Harrisburg."

Ned Hoffman, the famous Chicago detective, and Bridger's intimate friend, was at the time engaged in secret service work for the Government, and stopping at the Monongahela House in Pittsburg, Pa.

Bridger at once telegraphed to Hoffman to be on hand at the arrival of the train, and to hold the men "wanted" if they were passengers thereon.

An hour later Bridger received Hoffman's answer, assuring him that he would do as requested, and being weary, the two sleuth-hounds drove to the Bond street rooms, and were soon soundly slumbering.

CHAPTER XXX.

AT THE POST-OFFICE.

At sunrise Bridger and the Scotch detective were up and ready for business.

This day they determined to make another effort to unearth the lurking-place of the abductors of Annette, and release the fair captive.

Realizing that the day might bring them in contact with desperate men, they prepared themselves accordingly.

Their dress was the same as they had worn on the night previous, but white shirts took the place of the blue ones.

In their pockets they placed several extra pairs of steel manacles, gags, hempen cords, and each carried a brace of revolvers, and a small dark lantern.

Calling first at the St. Nicholas Hotel, they sat at breakfast with Dr. Macy, and narrated to him the experience of the past night.

As on the evening previous, the detectives painted everything in its brightest colors, and, on leaving the anxious old man, promised to lose no time in reporting to him the outcome of the day's search.

The detectives then visited the telegraph office at which they had operated during the past night.

Bridger left orders that any telegram which might arrive for him during the day should be sent at once to the post-office, and delivered to either himself or the Scotch detective.

The cashier brought forward several messenger boys, and they were instructed that they would find one or the other of the detectives at the general delivery window, at the post-office, if dispatched thither.

The two sleuth-hounds then repaired to the post-office.

They found the postmaster's assistant in his office, and communicated their business to him.

"The letter you forwarded to be remailed from Corydon," said he, "has not, as yet, had time to reach New York. However, if you desire to establish your watch to-day, gentlemen, a decoy letter can be prepared. Here are writing materials—write, inclose, and address the letter as you think best. A three-cent stamp can then be placed upon it, that stamped, so that no one might know whence it came, and the letter be placed in readiness to suit your purpose in the general delivery."

The Scotch detective wrote a hasty note, inclosed it in a stamped envelope, and addressed the envelope to:

"Mrs. Margaret Bolard, New York city."

The postmaster took the decoy letter, departed from the office, and soon after returned accompanied by the clerk at the T window of the general delivery, whom he introduced.

"Tell me," asked the Scotch detective, addressing the young man. "Do you remember of having heard any one call for letters for this Mrs. Margaret Bolard lately?"

"The name has been called for almost daily, I think," returned the clerk. "But so many names are called for that I cannot positively remember."

"Then you have no idea what description of person has called for the name?"

"No, sir. I have not."

"But you will not forget the name, 'Margaret Bolard,' to-day?"

"No, sir."

"I have instructed the young man," said the postmaster, "that you will remain without his window during the day, and that should the letter be called for he shall repeat the name, 'Margaret Bolard,' distinctly before delivering it, that you may readily know when it is being called for."

"Thank you, and will the young man be on duty at this window during the entire day?"

"Should he be relieved he will transmit his instructions," returned the official, "and, I think, gentlemen, that you can proceed on your watch, assured that we will thus aid you as far as we may."

Thanking the postmaster the two detectives soon after joined the noisy, hurrying throngs that all day beset the New York post-office, and taking a position near the T window, assumed to be two travelers, intent on the points of a railway map.

Patiently, for two hours, they held their wearisome watch in the hope of beholding the decoy letter delivered, but the day passed until three in the afternoon without event.

About this time a newsboy passed through the building, bearing a bundle of the afternoon papers, one of which Bridger purchased.

Almost the first item that struck the detective's eye was one among the telegraphic news, and read as follows:

"An unknown man, dressed as a gentleman, was found dead this morning in a cut near Alton, Pa., after the passage of the express train west. He had the appearance of a consumptive, and it is supposed that in attempting to cross the platforms of the cars his strength failed him, and he fell from the train."

"What do you make of that?" said Bridger, passing the paper to the Scotch detective.

"Bad, Bobe—bad!" returned Fandon, as he glanced at the item.

"Wait where you are," said Bridger, "and I will find out about it."

Saying so Bridger hastened to a telegraph office in Wall street, for the events I narrate occurred in the old Nassau street post-office.

Hence, he telegraphed the coroner at Alton to view the body found, and, if there was a mark in India-ink upon the dead man's breast, to place the body privately on ice, and notify him.

Returning to the post-office, he found the Scotch detective industriously at his post, and perceived that he smiled as he approached him.

"We'll know about the body soon," said Bridger.

"Ay, but here we have other news," returned the Scotch detective, presenting a telegram which a messenger boy had brought him during Bridger's absence.

It was from Detective Ned Hoffman, at Pittsburgh, and ran as follows :

"Have men described at police headquarters. They give their names as Pere Videre and Alfonse Godot. Train arrived four hours late. Answer."

"And did you answer it?" asked Bridger.

"Yes, over your name."

"Right. What did you say?"

"Hold men until I arrive. Large interest at stake, affording ample pay for trouble. Will wire you by and by."

"Good !" returned Bridger, and again the two detectives turned their attention to the line of letter-seekers at the window.

Two hours passed fruitlessly, and the porters began to light the gas in the building.

Suddenly a delivery boy from the Wall street telegraph office darted in and placed a second telegram in Bridger's hands.

Tearing it hastily open the detective perceived that it was from the Alton coroner, and read :

"Have viewed the body as asked. Find two English flags wrought in red ink, and the name Alfonse Godot in blue ink, upon the dead man's breast. Body on ice. Answer."

Bridger passed the telegram to the Scotch detective.

Fandon read it, and shook his head.

Bridger swiftly penciled an answer, placed a bill in the messenger's hand, and bade him haste away, and have it instantly dispatched.

As he turned again toward the Scotch detective he perceived that he had advanced closely toward the T window, and held his hand in a way to insure silence on Bridger's part.

On the instant the clerk's voice at the window said distinctly :

"A letter for Margaret Bolard, New York city, you say?"

"Yes, sir," was the answer.

And the detectives perceived at the head of the line without the window a shabby little Hebrew man, whom they at once recognized as Sammy Muggins, the patent butter enthusiast.

On receiving the letter which the clerk promptly handed him, Sammy stepped briskly aside from the line, carefully deposited the epistle in an interior pocket of his ulster, and

casting his sharp, rat-eyes about toward the window whence he had received it, passed through the door-way to the street.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHERE THE LETTER CARRIER LED.

As might be supposed, Sammy Muggins' did not depart from the post-office alone.

The street lamps had been lighted for some time, and the night was dark and damp.

Throngs of shop-hands, clerks, and laborers filled the sidewalks, returning from their day's labor.

Sammy Muggins shambled on in a sort of dog-trot through Nassau street, through Chatham and East Broadway, to Catherine.

Turning to the right upon Catherine street, he entered a grocery store.

A few minutes later he emerged from the grocery, bearing a basket upon his arm.

Reaching East Broadway, he continued up that street for some distance.

Suddenly pausing before a somber, old-fashioned brick dwelling, he ascended the stone steps thereof, and, after peering cautiously to the right and left to see if his movements might attract attention, he raised the cane he carried and tapped lightly upon the window to his right with its iron tip.

The next instant the door was opened by a woman, Sammy and his basket disappeared from sight within and the door was shut, locked, and bolted after him.

In the shadow of the buildings on the opposite side of the street, the Scotch detective and Bridger had paused, surveying the house, and laying their plans for entering it.

From where they stood the dwelling seemed to be without an occupant.

Not a ray of light shone from any of the windows, but, as they cautiously crossed the street toward it, the sleuth-hounds perceived that through the interstices between the wooden shutters that barred the windows of the basement a faint glimmer bravely strove with the dirty glass to shine forth into the dark world without.

In the basement was evidently a cheap clothing store, but, being Saturday, it was closed, and the light within seemed to be far back from the street.

The window above, on which Sammy Muggins had tapped for admission, was carefully guarded by a thick curtain, so that no light might penetrate forth.

Ascending the stone steps the detectives listened at the keyhole of the door, and heard a subdued conversation going on, as if in a room directly to the right of the hall-way, and evidently between the woman and Sammy.

Soon after Sammy came forth from the room, and its door closed after him.

The sound of his footsteps grew fainter as they receded from the door, and it was evident that he had followed the dark hall-way to the rear, and was descending to the basement beneath.

A moment later Bridger's eye at the keyhole beheld a flash of light burst, as if from an open door, and light the rear hall-way.

Then came distinctly the surly growl of a dog, and the hum of voices from the same direction.

Then the light vanished, and all was still.

"Sammy has joined Moses in the rear basement," whispered Bridger, "and it would seem they have a surly brute of a dog down there with them. But we have no time to lose. So here goes."

Taking from his pocket a pair of manacles, Bridger leaned forward over the iron railing of the steps, and tapped lightly with the hard steel on the window-pane, in imitation of Sammy's signal.

The door from the room to the right of the hall-way opened at once, and some one came forth from it.

The next instant the key turned in the lock of the door, the bolt slid back, the door opened cautiously, and a young Hebrew woman appeared in the half-open door-way. "Does Moses Muggins reside here?" asked Bridger, in a low voice.

"Yes. Vat you vant?" returned the woman.

"I have been told he has rooms to let here," quoth Bridger, planting his foot softly over the sill, and against the door.

"You vas told wrong. Ve have no rooms to let," she replied, eying the detectives keenly.

"Well, could we come in and see Mr. Muggins? We are his friends."

"He vas not in. Nobody vas in. I vas Moses Muggins' daughter, Rachel. If you vant any vord vid him you could leave it by me."

"Well, the truth is I have an important matter of busi-

ness with him. It is of a secret nature, but, as you are his daughter, I can tell you. But—pardon me!—I must whisper it, so that no one may overhear.”

As he spoke Bridger pushed closer toward Rachel, as if to whisper in her ear.

The young woman seemed to divine that all was not right, for she made an effort to slam shut the door and scream, just as Bridger swiftly circled her body, pressed her arms helplessly to her side, and planted his right hand over her mouth and nostrils.

It was the work of a moment to convey the captive, Rachel, into the room adjoining, close, and lock the doors.

This was accomplished by the two agile sleuth-hounds almost without noise, but a deep growl from beneath told that the Jew's dog had snuffed danger overhead.

The room the detectives had entered was evidently Rachel's sitting-room, bed-chamber, and kitchen in one.

A lamp burned dimly on a mantel-shelf above a cook-stove, upon which several pots and kettles were steaming.

As the Scotch detective secured the room-door, and turned again to Bridger's assistance, he stood in the center of the room, firmly holding the struggling girl.

Placing his lips to her ear, he whispered:

“Pardon me, Miss Rachel, for this rudeness. We are detective officers, and mean you no harm.”

On hearing this the young woman's struggles ceased, and Bridger continued:

“We must bind and gag you until we have searched the house.”

At this point Rachel intimated, by a nasal sound, that she wished to speak.

Bridger suddenly drew aside his hand from her mouth, but kept it ready for instant application.

“Who are you after—my fadder?” whispered the trembling girl.

“No. We are after the tall, silly-looking thief who lives here.”

“Vat you say? You vant told me he vas a tief?”

Bridger nodded assent.

“Sure—sure my fadder know not dot, or ve vould send him long ago quick away.”

This speech, in defense of her father's integrity, the frightened young woman spoke in a key several degrees above a whisper, and the dog barked fiercely beneath.

Bridger placed his hand in close proximity to the girl's mouth, and gave his head a threatening nod.

"Speak in a whisper!" he commanded. "And now tell me if your father did not know this man's business, how came he to let him rooms in this house?"

"I would have you to know", returned Rachel, "dat I give de man rooms, by myself, and my fadder vas down stairs by de cloding store. Dot silly man come von evening vid his vife and daughter, and ve have, dot time, three rooms idle on de floor above, and dey vas quite shenteel beople, I tink, so I let de rooms."

"Well, if you didn't know this man as a thief, how did you suppose he lived?"

"Vell, I could see dat de daughter vas a sweet, innocent young woman, and de man vas a silly-minded, strong man, and dat de Irish voman have plenty money vid her. Could you make of such beoples tiefs? Would you not see how such beople might live?"

"Such talk," said Bridger, "would do if you were a lawyer or witness at court. But we are detectives, and know that you, your father, and Sammy, all know that this silly man is a thief."

"Vell, I told you it vas a lie vat you say," returned Rachel, angrily, pitching her voice above a whisper. "Vat it is more, if dis man was a tief, quick, right away, should he get away by de house! I would go right away so you shall get him. Or, if you vant it, shust let me call loud vonce, and he come here, and you get him. Oh, dere vid—"

And before Bridger could shut off the young woman's utterance she had begun, in loud accents, her proposed summons.

"Rachel," said Bridger, winking at the daughter of Moses, in acknowledgment of her shrewdness, as his hand once more enforced her to silence, "you will excuse me, but we will have to muzzle you."

Placing the girl on her bed in the corner, the two detectives speedily bound and gagged her in such a manner that she could not move or utter a cry.

Barely had they accomplished this task when the dog beneath uttered a series of vicious yelps, sounding as if the basement door had been opened.

A moment later a stealthy, cat-like step approached in the hall-way without, and a rap came upon the door of the room.

Then a voice without whispered, hoarsely:

"Miss Rachel! Miss Rachel!"

"Hush!" quoth the Scotch detective in Bridger's ear. "It is the voice of the crazy giant."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CAPTIVE MAIDEN.

Again came the tap on the door, and again the voice said, in low tones:

"Miss Rachel! Miss Rachel!"

The angry yelps of the fierce brute beneath now rang out harshly throughout the hall-ways of the house.

A moment later a voice like that of Moses Muggins called out from the stairway at the rear:

"Ho dere vid you, Rachel! Vat vas de matter dere?"

The Scotch detective turned low the lamp on the mantel, and the two sleuth-hounds softly approached the door.

As they did so the sound of "Silly" Billy's footsteps, as he walked to the rear of the hall way, reached their ears.

"Vas dat you, Rachel, I called!" shouted the voice of Moses Muggins again.

"No, 'e, 'e! honly me," said "Silly" Billy. "Misses sent me for the groceries."

"Vell, and a letter Sammy has also brought her."

"Letter? 'e, 'e! She will be glad."

"I should tink so. Quiet there, Kaiser! Quiet, I say! I never vind him make such noise ven you come down before—quiet, you scoundrel dog! Kaiser! Brute! Come down vid me, and I give you de tings."

An instant afterward the yelps of the dog became more subdued, and the detectives surmised that the twain had entered the basement beneath, and closed the door after them.

This left the dark hall-way without clear, and the sleuth-hounds stole softly forth; Bridger locking in the captive, Rachel, and placing the key of the apartment in his pocket.

Opening the eye of the dark lantern which he carried, the Scotch detective threw its light along the hall-way to the rear.

A stair-way led at its farthest end below, and one also ascended to the floor above.

Cautiously the two sleuth-hounds approached, and ascended the latter stair-way.

As they did so the dog's bark sounded more viciously than before, and they could hear the rattle of his chain as

he exerted himself to be free and demonstrate to his master that something unusual was going on.

Arriving in the upper hall-way, the detectives perceived that it was in size the same as that beneath.

A stair-way at their left led to the upper house, to the right and rear were dead walls, and to the left were three doors leading, as the sleuth-hounds supposed, to the three apartments occupied by Billy, Meg Bolard, and Annette.

As the detectives advanced up the hall-way they heard voices within the apartment to which the third door opened.

Suddenly the noise of the dog ended in a whine, as if his master had whipped him to silence.

The conversation then came plainly from the room to the ears of the sleuth-hounds, as with bated breath they stood listening without the door.

It became evident at once that the parties within were no other than Meg Bolard and Annette.

"You can't stand it any longer, eh? Is that what you say to me, me foine lady? Well, you'll have to stand it, the same as mesilf, thin," said the harsh voice of Meg Bolard.

"Oh, but it is so horrible to live here, hiding from all the world this way," returned the musical voice of Annette. "I'd rather be in a genuine prison, Mam Meg, than here. Besides, we might live in many better places than this, where we would be at no one's mercy, and could walk out and be at liberty, without danger of the piano-tuner finding us."

"You think so? You think so, eh?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, bad luck to ye, my little darling, it's mesilf well knows that that piano-tuner you spake so often of is more than a piano tuner. A detective he is, and from the Scotland Yard, London—there, for ye! An' he's after yer father, an' me, an' Billy, to ruin us all wid a trumped-up charge to make money. And phat's more, I belaves that ye knew he was such whin ye come wid him from Corydon on the thrain. And it's mesilf belaves ye'd be glad if he'd pop right in on us here. Answer me the truth then, wid you—am I right?"

Meg's voice had grown violent, and when she had ended speaking there was a pause for a moment.

Then came Annette's answer, as soft and solemn as if it were a prayer to Heaven.

"For my part," she said, "I would pray it turn so."

"What? You ungrateful hussy! Wad ye consign yer

poor mother that gave ye birth, and has rared ye a soft darlin', to a prison wid yer prayer?"

"No, Mam Meg, for you have always been kind to me, and my prayer is that both you and I may escape prison. For that reason I wish you to leave here, and I pray that the man from Scotland Yard may be directed here before Billy's crimes place us all in prison."

"Billy's crimes! In prison! What do you mane?"

"Has not Billy robbed people in New York?"

"Robbed people in New York! What do you mane?"

"What has he been doing when he has gone from the house at night, and brought money back with him?"

"Workin'! workin'! of course—what else?"

"Stealing, Mam Meg, stealing! It is idle to deceive me."

"Decave you! Why, me foine little lady, you take the breath from me wid your catechism. What gave you to think this of Billy?"

"My eyes."

"Your eyes? Well, go on—spake it out! spake it out!"

"Mam Meg, when that old Jew saw that we kept close in doors, and sent out for everything, he thought there was something wrong about us—that we were striving to keep hidden from the law."

"Yis, yis; spake it out."

"Well, he raised the rent from ten dollars a week to fifty, didn't he?"

"Yis. And what did I say to the ould villain?"

"You said that you could not pay the amount, though you had plenty of money, and could do it."

"Yis, and if I told the old vagabond that, how quick would he raised the rint agin, and had ivery cint from me? But go on! go on!"

"Well, you said you'd have to send Billy out to work, and see if he could raise rent money for you, didn't you?"

"Yis, I did. Go on! Go on!"

"Then the old Jew turned to Billy, and asked him if he could do any work. And Billy winked at you, and then at the old Jew, and suddenly seizing the old Jew from behind, held him tightly, while he pretended to be stealing from his pockets."

"Yis—and what of that?"

"Why, then Billy, and the old Jew, and you, roared out laughing—and the old Jew said that there would be no doubt that the rest would come. Then he took Billy down stairs with him, and that night Billy went out, and since then there has been no more talk about the rent. But this

night you can rest assured that there are scores of detectives in New York eager to catch Billy, and suppose they should come here after us?"

"Hi!" shrieked Meg. "Annette Bolard, mark ye this! I've niver laid finger on yez yet. And, though it's a hard thing for a mother to say to her own, if iver ye name detectives to me in this way again, I'll raise a chair, and lave ye a corpse at me feet!"

While Meg thus vented her wrath in a violent tone the Scotch detective softly turned the door-knob, and found that the door was unlocked.

The angry woman had evidently raised a chair in a threatening manner, as if to impress her threat on Annette, for, in a calm voice, the threatened girl answered:

"Mam Meg, I am not in fear that you will harm me. You, a woman so good, who lifted me when a tiny, witless babe, from the arms of my mother, when she fell dead on the threshold, starved on her husband's father's estates, and have since reared me while those who murdered my grandfather have ofttimes importuned you to permit my murder—you will not harm me now."

The chair fell with a crash from Meg Bolard's grasp upon the floor, and she stammered forth, in evident terror:

"My God! Annette, who told you this?"

"I did," said the Scotch detective, throwing wide the door, and walking into the room, followed by Bridger.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE RESCUE.

Annette, in a calico robe, the picture of a pretty, animated maid of all work, stood near the stove in the front part of the room, looking after some food in preparation thereon.

Upon a table in the center of the apartment burned a lamp.

Near it was an easy-chair, upon which Meg had been sitting and sewing.

Before it stood the excited woman, glaring at Annette.

The chair which she had raised as if to strike Annette lay near by, broken upon the floor.

Both recognized the man from Scotland Yard on the instant, and both gave vent to a startled scream.

Then Annette, with a cry of joy, as if the hope of an age

had suddenly poured all its golden treasures in reality on the instant to her gaze, bounded forward and threw herself in the Scotch detective's arms.

"Oh, Fandon! It is you, ain't it, Fandon?" she cried. "You have followed us until you have found us, haven't you? Oh, how I have prayed for this! You will never, never leave me now, will you? Promise me you will never leave me again."

"Never!" said the Scotch detective, as he clasped the maiden to his breast, kissed her fondly, and a manly tear dimmed his bright, black eye.

Meg threw her hands wildly above her head, her eyes glaring in terror, and staggering back, half fell, half threw herself in the chair near the table.

"In the name of mercy, what do it all mane?" she cried.

"It means this," said Bridger, displaying his badge, "that Pere Videre has been arrested for his share in the killing of old Godot, and that Bolard, your late husband, rather than submit to arrest, killed himself."

"Killed himself?"

"Yes."

"And what, thin, are yez going to do wid us?"

"This, Meg", said the Scotch detective, coming forward, followed by Annette, and kindly lifting Meg's hand in his: "If you will do what I ask you to do I assure you that you shall not enter a prison, and that you shall return to Garson and possess your dead husabnd's lands and property, and live there in peace."

"He is dead, then?" she asked.

"Yes, as my brother officer has informed you, he killed himself through fear of arrest the same night that you, Billy, and Annette left Garson on the train."

"And will you put Billy to prison?"

"No, Meg, I'll promise you that also," returned the Scotch detective. "He has robbed men in this city, as you know, but I blame the Jews down stairs for that, and will shield Billy, and make them pay for it."

"And so they should, the blood-sucking vagabonds!" said Meg, as the tears flowed fast down her cheeks. "And Annette will tell yez hersilf that they raised me rint, and charged over-price for ivery bit to ate we sint for, when they found we were hiding, and that they set Billy at it."

"There, there, Mam Meg!" quoth Annette, throwing her arms about Meg's neck, and kissing her. "Did not I tell you that the man from Scotland Yard would bring us rest and happiness? And I know, Mam Meg, that what he

promises you he will do for you. He has promised to be my husband, Mam Meg, and I know he would not tell you, who have been so good to me, anything but the truth."

"And what do yez want me to do for ye?" asked Meg, somewhat assured.

"Only that you and Billy go with us to court, and say whether it is the true Pere Videre that the officers have in charge."

"And where is the court—in England?"

"No, not many miles from New York."

"An' indade, if it's him, we'd quick say that. Sure nather of us is anyways beholdin' to the squalin' villain."

"You will do it, then?"

"Av course I'll do't—and is that all?"

"No. You must manage Billy so that he will be willing to go with us from this house to the hotel."

"Oh, lave that to me. Whist! for there he is."

A gentle tap sounded upon the door without as Meg spoke.

"We'll step aside in this room," whispered the Scotch detective. "And, Annette, you go on with your work at the stove. And remember, Meg, as soon as Billy is safe in lock the door, for the Jews might come up before we are ready for them."

So saying the Scotch detective and Bridger stepped aside into the dark bedroom adjoining, while Meg approached the door, permitted "Silly" Billy to enter, and locked it behind him.

Barely had she done so when, yelping like a beast of prey, the fierce mastiff, dragging his broken chain, came flying up the stair-way, and bounded fiercely against the door.

There he stood, baying and scratching the floor, like a blood-hound who had driven his prey to cover.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A CRITICAL MOMENT.

"I doesn't know what hails the dog!" said Billy, taking off his hat, and a broad smile overspread his countenance.

And as he removed the cover from the basket he carried and came gently forward toward Meg he appeared anything else than the fierce and daring highwayman who had pounced like a tiger upon his prey, and baffled the police force of a great city.

"But, lo! see 'ere, Misses Meg," he added, "I is got you a letter!"

A letther! from me ould man, I suppose. And let me read it, thin!"

And Meg took the decoy letter from Billy's hand, and tore it open.

"And 'ere, Misses Hannette," continued Billy, approaching Annette, "'ere I is got you some sugar, coffee, greens, and a turkey. And a box of sugar candy, and lots of good things. See-ree-go! what feastings we'll 'ave!"

Annette received the basket of provisions and set them aside, while her bright eyes glanced continually through the door-way into the dark room where the waiting sleuth-hounds stood, as if she had determined not to permit the Scotch detective to far escape her eyesight again.

"As sure as I live," quoth Meg, elevating her voice above the clamor of the dog without, "the old man is dead!"

"What? Who?" asked Billy.

"Why, me old man, Bolard, or whatever his name was. And it's more than his wife of twinty years could tell."

"Master Bolard dead!" exclaimed Billy.

"Yis," returned Meg, "as dead as an ould salt mackerel!"

"Klick!" ejaculated Billy, imitating the hangman's method by swirling his right hand about his neck, and jerking it upward.

"Quack!" returned Meg, dashing her hand across her throat, as a suicide might do in slashing his windpipe.

Strange to say, on thus learning of Bolard's death Billy suddenly burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, fairly clapping his hands and dancing in idiotic glee.

"What! you unmannerly vagabond! Do you see the villain, Annette? glad to the face of a poor widow that's just heard the shockin' intelligence of her husband's death?" quoth Meg.

"Shame, Billy," said Annette, "Dad Bolard was always good to you, Billy."

"Sometimes," quoth Billy, sobering down somewhat. "Ho! no, I is not glad. Poor Dad Bolard!"

Then, unable to control his real feelings, he burst again into laughter, clapped his hands, and danced about in the greatest glee.

Annette and Meg could not restrain themselves, and burst forth in merry peals of laughter as well.

Bridger and the Scotch detective also laughed quietly at the crazy giant's antics, and had Bolard's spirit at that moment visited the vicinity it had certainly wished success

to the yelping brute without that snapped and bounded against the door, as if in hope to break it in, and tear those within to pieces.

"Was hit in the letter?" asked Billy, pausing a moment in his dance, near Meg.

"Yis," answered Meg, "and if you will give over your outrageous nonsense for a moment I'll rade it to you."

Billy subsided to a quiet giggle, and Meg continued:

"Listen, you, now!"

" 'WIFE MEG:' says he, 'I write to inform you that I have met wid a serious accident. The truth is, I cut me throat wid a corn-knife rather than be arrested for murderin' old Jean Godot, and I am now dead. Yours, elsewhere,

" 'HARVEY BOLARD, otherwise IRON MIKE DRUGO.'

"So you see," added Meg, never for an instant wondering how a dead man might write a letter, "we have it from his own lips that he is dead. And—howld yer antics now—this noight we are to lave this place, go back to Garson, and I be landlady of the hotel".

"Silly" Billy rubbed his hands together, and simpered in glee, at this bit of information.

Then his face suddenly became serious, and turning his glance toward the door whereat the dog continued to yelp, he said:

"They told me I should work to-night!"

"Thin I tell you, you shall niver work to-night, nor niver ag'in, for thim, the blood-sucking villains!"

Billy smiled as if pleased to hear this, and said:

"Maybe they will make you send me, Misses Meg."

"No, they won't! I've a man here wid me now that you know, Billy, and he'll attend to thim. And he promises—do you moind now, Billy—that if you do what he says, and go wid him, like a dacent man, we'll nather of us see the insoide of a prison, but go right off and live in the hotel forever."

Billy's eyes filled with wonder as Meg spoke, and he glanced about the room in a startled manner, as if expecting to see the person spoken of.

"Will you be dacent, thin, and do what's bid ye?" demanded Meg.

"Where is 'e?" demanded Billy.

"It is I, Billy," said the Scotch detective, stepping through the door-way into the light as he spoke, and extending his hand. "You know me, Billy, and know that I always speak the truth."

The broad frame of the crazy giant trembled violently as he placed his brawny hand in the Scotch detective's grasp, his eyes darted about as if looking for a method of escape, and he whispered, weirdly :

"See-ree go, Master Fandon, see-ree-go !"

Here was a critical moment.

If the idiot's brain possessed reason enough to comprehend that the Scotch detective wanted to befriend him, and not to cast him in prison as before all would be well.

If, however, through fear and excitement, he became a frenzied maniac, and used his great strength in a fancied hope to baffle the two sleuth-hounds, there was but one way to deal with him.

In that case the detectives felt that it would be a dangerous experiment against life and limb to pit themselves against the crazy giant's skill in personal battle and the ponderous power of his sinewy frame.

Should he prove unsubmitive and attempt hostilities against the Scotch detective it had been arranged that Bridger should on the instant shoot him down.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CONQUERED BY KINDNESS.

Meg saw the danger of the moment, and as the brawny footpad's eyes rolled wildly in his head like those of an angry wild beast she sprang forward, and threw her arms about his neck.

"Oh, Billy !" she cried. "What do you mane? Won't ye be goin' wid me back to the hotel to live like an honest man? I tell ye, ye shall niver see the inside of a prison. And mark ye, now, Detective Fandon that stands wid us now is my friend, and he is your friend. Sure he was only after ould Bolard, the dead man, for the murder in England, and, since he's dead, he don't want us."

"No, that he don't, Billy," quoth Annette, placing her hands upon the Scotch detective's shoulder, and resting her head upon her arms. "And, look you, Billy, I'll tell you a secret—he only wants me. He and I are to be married, and you and Mam Meg are to be at the wedding."

The mad glare in the crazy giant's eye slowly departed under the assurance thus timely offered by Meg and Annette.

He knew that they had never deceived him, and it began

to dawn upon his diseased brain that had the Scotch detective intended his arrest he would at once have clasped manacles upon his wrists.

It was not the prison, however, but the pillory and the lash, that he feared.

He did not speak, but seemed to be reasoning, with all the brain power he possessed, and endeavoring to convince himself that he was not in danger of the dreaded "cat."

Slowly his eyes, which had been fixed on Meg's face, turned from her toward the Scotch detective.

Then, for the first, he perceived Bridger as he emerged from the dark door-way, and, with a cry of terror, he started forward, fell upon his knees, clasped the Scotch detective's right hand in both of his, and, with an imploring look, cried out:

"There, Master Fandon! there 'e is, too! 'e was with you in Millbank jail when I was flogged before. Don't let them whip me! Don't let them whip me! Don't let them whip me!"

"Billy," said the Scotch detective, "did I ever tell you a lie?"

"See-ree-go! Master Fandon! Don't let them whip me!"

"Did I not say to the magistrate in England that such as you should not be whipped?"

"See-ree-go! Master Fandon!"

"Did I not make the keeper, who flogged you at Millbank, lay it on lightly?"

"See-ree-go! Master Fandon!"

"And did he not do it?"

"See ree-go, Master Fandon!"

"Then, I tell you now, Billy, that I am your friend. There are men after you, in New York, but they don't know you, and I won't let them know you. It was the Jews' fault that you went forth nights. So, do you just what Misses Meg says, and you shall go back in peace, and live at the hotel."

Glancing toward the door, at which the fierce mastiff continued to yelp savagely, Billy said:

"Must I work for 'em to-night?"

"No," returned the Scotch detective, pointing toward Bridger. "He and I will take care of him."

"And didn't I tell ye that same, ye villain! Get up wid ye now," said Meg, "for as soon as Detective Fandon and his friend get these Jews from our way we're bound to a good hotel for supper."

"I believe hit's all true," said Billy, suddenly rising to his feet, and rubbing his hands together in glee.

Complete confidence had seemed to dawn upon his idiotic brain as abruptly as the sudden fear of the lash had depressed it, and he began to dance and caper about as happily as when he had heard of Bolard's death.

"Whist! it's all right now!" whispered Meg in the Scotch detective's ear. "He believes us. I could wind him about me finger now loike a dish cloth, and so could you. He'd go to blazes for aither of us."

At this moment to vary the tumult made by the fierce dog without a loud rap came upon the door, and a voice demanded:

"Ho, dere, vid you, Misses Bolards! Who vas talking vid you? De dog smells out de crooked business, and vants in vid it. Who got you dare, I say, vid you?"

"Whist! it's the voice of Moses Muggins!" whispered Meg.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE "FENCE" AND HIS DOG.

At the sound of Muggins' voice the crazy giant suddenly paused in front of the door, as if intently listening.

Annette clung closely to the Scotch detective in terror.

Fandon carefully trimmed his dark-lantern.

"Open de door quick! You hear vot I speak, Misses Bolards? I vould vind out vat comes to my house, and shoot down vat makes me trouble? Open de door, I say, vid you!" yelled Moses Muggins without, while the huge mastiff scratched upon the door's oaken panels, and yelped fiercely.

"What's this noise you and your dog be makin' widout there, you ould Jew ye? Is it more rint av me ye're wantin', or are ye drunk, frightening the loife out of us? Git out av that wid ye, and roll yersilf over till ye be sober," cried Meg, approaching the door.

"Quite vell you know, Misses Bolard, I vasn't drunk. Open the door!"

"Open the door, is it—and be aten up wid that brute of a dog? What do ye mane? Are ye crazy?"

"De dog vas all right. Quick smelled he out de crooked business, and broke his chain, and come vere it vas. And ven I come quick up to vip him back to de store, I vind,

by my ears, de dog vas right. And, I say, you have strange men widin vid you vat vant to rob me. So open out vid de door, and you should at vonce all go by de street."

"Out on ye, ye ould crab ye. I'll have ye to know I'm a lady. And if that's all ye want, ye ould thafe, take away the dog that's the better animal av the two av yez, and we'll be lavin' yer ould rat-trap of a 'padding ken' and 'fence-madge,' and be sindin' around for ye a dozen 'coppers' to whisper in yer ears about sindin' out his 'pig-widgeon' nights. You miserable ould thafe of a 'kidsman!'"

This threat, couched in strictly "professional" language, caused Moses Muggins to alter his tactics, and he began to belabor the dog to quietness.

"Quit your noise, you villain dog! You hear, you Kaiser? Quiet, I told you!" he cried, as he struck the brute repeatedly with his cane, and the dog's fierce bark turned to a yelp of pain, and then to a low, surly growl.

"Visper, Misses Bolards," quoth Muggins, softly, at the keyhole. "I vas nod mad vid you, only vid de dog. Who vas dat stranger man, vat have come to see you?"

"Now yer spakin' in a more proper stoyle to a lady," returned Meg. "Take away the dog below to the store, so he won't bite the gintleman and you shall see him. Can't a woman invite a friend to her rooms that she pays rint for widout all Jerusalem, and their other dogs bein' turned loose about it?"

"Dere, dere now, Misses Bolards, I vas too quick mad vid de dog. I vill, right away, tie him down in de store, and you should have a fine present for my quick temper."

When Muggins had thus spoken he endeavored to drag away the unwilling dog from the door.

He coaxed, cursed, beat, and pulled the obstinate brute to no purpose.

Then he called loudly to Sammy Muggins, and Sammy's shambling footsteps sounded in the hall-way, as he obediently approached.

By main force, the two men now dragged the huge mastiff away, the noise of his claws as they scratched and held back on the floor without, giving proof of his enforced departure.

A moment later, from the rear hall-way, came the voice of Moses Muggins.

"Come out now vid your friend in de hall-vay," he cried. "De dog vas now all right, Misses Bolards, and I vant to speak vid you only von vord."

"And now, Meg," said the Scotch detective, hasten, you

and Annette, to put on your traveling-dresses, and pack such things as you may wish to carry with you in your satchels."

"Have no fear; we will return soon for you," he added, imprinting a kiss upon Annette's forehead. "So do as I bid you."

"Are we ready, Bobe?"

"Ay," returned Bridger, taking forth and cocking a revolver.

"Then let's go. Come, Billy."

As he spoke the Scotch detective opened the door, and he and Bridger hastened forth into the dark hall-way.

Billy hesitated, and looked toward Meg.

She pointed toward the door, stamped her foot impatiently, and said:

"Go!"

A roguish twinkle kindled in the crazy giant's eyes.

He evidently thought that the two sleuth-hounds were bent on "cracking" the Muggins' safe in the basement, and with a bound he cleared the door-way, following to their assistance.

As the Scotch detective threw the light of the dark-lantern along the hall-way it fell upon nothing but the walls, doors, and upper stair-way.

As its rays lit the rear wall a fierce bark sounded from the lower stair-way, and it was evident that the two Jews and the mastiff stood out of sight at its first landing.

"Come on vid you, Misses Bolards," said the voice of Moses Muggins.

Then, as the dog let forth another series of fierce yelps, he added:

"Come on. De dog vas all right. Kaiser wouldn't harm you."

The two sleuth-hounds hastened swiftly to the head of the stairs, and the Scotch detective cast the light of the dark-lantern down upon the landing.

Beneath stood the Jews, crouching over the dog, and holding back on his chain.

Each held ready a revolver, and the eyes of the eager mastiff, as he strained every nerve to gain his freedom, did not flash more maliciously with rage, hate, and determination than did those of his uncouth masters.

Bridger's quick eye perceived that the stair-way leading down had been greased, evidently that the detectives might slip, and be at the mercy of the pistols and dog.

"Steady your light, so that I can fix the dog," said Bridger, "and look sharp for the stairs, they're greased."

Perceiving that the sleuth hounds had discovered the grease on the stair-way the two Jews suddenly loosed their grasp on the dog's chain, and, quick as thought, leveled their pistols, and fired.

At the instant the Scotch detective had descended two steps on the stair-way, and Bridger leaned over the baluster at his rear, waiting to get a good shot at the dog, without endangering the lives of the Jews.

The aim of the men was fair, for crash came a bullet through the Scotch detective's dark lantern, shattering the glass, putting out the light, and knocking it from his hand.

A responsive shriek sounded from Annette's chamber. The bloodthirsty mastiff came bounding up the stairway. And all was black darkness.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE BATTLE ON THE STAIR-WAY.

"At them, Kaiser! de tiefs! loafers! at them, good dog, Kaiser!" cried Moses Muggins.

The sleuth-hounds had crouched low, fearing that the Jews would repeat their fire.

But they did not.

They feared that the flashes of their pistols would betray them to the aim of their antagonists, and that their bullets might strike their dog.

They felt that in the darkness, and on the slippery stair-way they could rely on Kaiser to do the rest.

The blood-thirsty brute needed not the urging of his master.

With a deep-toned bay the eager beast came bounding up the stair-way toward the crouching detectives.

In the black darkness they felt that they were to a degree defenseless against the brute, and believed that they would be torn by his fangs.

But even as the huge mastiff's hot breath fanned the Scotch detective's cheek, and the dog's jaws widened with a yelp of victory to seize his throat, the bay of the fierce brute suddenly ceased.

The next moment the plunge and fall of a heavy body sounded upon the greased stair way beneath.

Then came a score of weighty thuds upon the banisters, walls, and stair-way that shook the very house.

Then followed a hasty scramble on the landing.

And then all was as still as the grave.

It was all the work of an instant, but in that instant Bridger managed to light the dark-lantern which he carried.

As its rays fell upon the stair-way and landing the sight that greeted the eyes of the two sleuth-hounds was one never to be forgotten.

The crazy giant stood clasping the throats of Moses and Sammy Muggins in his brawny hands, and held the Jews pinned against the wall so that the feet of neither touched the flooring.

Their eyes glared forth vacantly, their tongues protruded hideously, and their limbs twitched nervously, as if they were in the throes of death.

The huge mastiff lay motionless and dead near by on the landing.

The crazy giant's left foot rested upon the dog's body, and, turning his silly, smiling face toward the astonished sleuth-hounds on the stairs, he said, in tones as gentle as those of a schoolgirl:

"See-ree-go! Master Fandon, see-ree go!"

"Let them down on the floor, Billy, for Heaven's sake!" cried the Scotch detective. "Take your hands off their throats. We don't want to kill them!"

Not until the two sleuth-hounds had reached his side did the powerful footpad alter his position or relax his hold.

He, however, readily yielded his victims to their care, and stood by, simpering, as the detectives laid the forms of the two men on the landing.

Moses and Sammy still breathed, but it was evident that had they remained a short while longer in the clutch of the silly garroter their bodies had shown that peculiar burst of skin which betokens death by strangulation.

"Don't touch them more," said the Scotch detective, pointing to the insensible forms at his feet, and addressing Billy.

"But this dog 'ere?" quoth Billy, grasping the skin of the dead dog's neck in his left hand, and lifting its body forth at arm's length. "I is been wantin' to kill 'im, because 'e worried Misses Meg."

Drawing back his brawny right fist as he spoke he dealt the body of the animal a blow which sent it flying through the air to the landing beneath.

"Billy, you are a good one!" said the Scotch detective. "And now tell us how you did it."

"Why, 'e see, Master Fandon," simpered Billy, bowing and scraping, and pulling at the hat which he held in his hand, after the manner of a bashful schoolboy, "bang went the shot, and I sees where you is when the light goes hout, and I sees the dog comin', and I jumps past you, and 'e comes right hin my harms. Then my foot slips, and I falls. But 'e falls hunder me hon the steps, and my knees hon 'is stomach. Then I lifts 'im by the throat and pounds 'im hon the stairs. Then I dashes 'im round, mowin' for the Jews' 'eads. But they dodges me. Then I drops the dog, and reaches out, and gets 'em by the 'klicks.' Hand I 'ad 'em 'clicked' hup when you struck the glim. See-ree-go! Master Fandon—see-ree-go!"

"Billy's a tough crackin', as they say here in America, eh, Boobe?" laughed the Scotch detective.

"A regular corker!" assented Bridger.

"And now, Boobe," said the Scotch detective, "with your permission, I'll bounce back for an instant to assure Annette and Meg that matters are all well ended, and to hurry them up in readiness for their departure."

The Scotch detective speedily performed his mission, and returned, bearing a bottle of liquor, which he had obtained from Meg, to be used medicinally in the resuscitation of the injured men.

"Ye can give Billy a drap of that if ye don't moind," cried Meg from the door after him. "A sup or two of the stuff acts likewise medicinally on him, and makes him as ployable as a kitten. His big skin wouldn't hold enough of it to make one of the stiff bristles on his head bend, and twinty gallons av it wouldn't turn his brain—for nothing at all is a difficult commodity to turn. And that's whoy the bould villain is so glad to be gettin' back to the hotel, where the spiggot's niver out of a barrel of the strongest buzz saw throat wash for his own special consumption."

"And is it possible, Billy, that you like this stuff?" said the Scotch detective, making a wry face at the bottle.

Billy's huge mouth spread almost from ear to ear in one glad, expectant joy-smile, and reaching for the proffered bottle, he remarked, as he lifted it to his lips:

"See-ree-go! Master Fandon—see-ree-go!"

Meg had said that a sup or two had a medicinal effect on him, but Billy's sups proved large ones, for he had swallowed down three-fourths of the bottle's contents ere the Scotch detective could wrench it from him.

The dram, however, surely tended to assure the crazy giant that the two sleuth hounds were his friends, and he danced and simpered in high glee, while they stooped to minister to his insensible victims.

Lifting Moses Muggins to a sitting posture the detectives poured a quantity of the liquor into his mouth, which he swallowed involuntarily, and they then administered the same treatment to Sammy.

Placing the dark-lantern in Billy's hands, the Scotch detective bade him go ahead and light the way.

He then lifted Moses Muggins in his arms, and followed down the stair-way, while Bridger brought up the rear, bearing Sammy.

At the landing beneath, the crazy giant lifted the body of poor Kaiser by the thick nape skin, and bore along the weighty carcass in his sinewy left hand, with as little apparent effort as if it had been that of a kitten.

"Hit do be funny, Master Fandon," he said. "Hevery one hof us 'as a dog in 'is 'and!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE JEW'S TREASURE.

The stair way which the crazy giant and the burdened sleuth-hounds pursued ended in the basement at the open door of a large, low, dirty room, which had been partitioned off from the front store-room.

Midway in the partitions was a door, which was locked and barred.

Near the partition, and against either wall, was a small cot bed.

Against the partition, and to the right of the door, stood a massive safe, wide open.

To the right of the door-way at which the detectives entered, was a large, shallow box, half filled with straw, which had served as Kaiser's kennel.

To the left was a writing desk, upon which burned a lamp.

At the rear of the room a large quantity of old clothing was piled, and at the apartment's center was a stove.

The Scotch detective placed Moses Muggins upon the bed nearest the open safe; Bridger laid Sammy Muggins on the cot to its left, and 'Silly' Billy tossed Kaiser's body into the box which had served as his kennel.

The crazy giant then squatted on the floor near by, and began to arrange the dead dog in a position to resemble life.

Moses and Sammy Muggins were now breathing freely, but, as yet, neither of them had spoken.

While awaiting their resuscitation the Scotch detective and Bridger approached the huge safe and turned the eye of the dark lantern upon its contents.

A glance sufficed to show them that Moses Muggins was possessed of wealth which he could never have gotten through the medium of the second-hand clothing business which he professed to run, and that it was only a cover.

One large drawer was filled with government bonds of large denomination, four other drawers were packed with bundles of greenback bills, while the remaining room of the safe was occupied by a curious mass of watches, diamonds, coins, jewels, ornaments, and utensils of every conceivable kind, in gold and silver.

"How that 'boodle' pile would tickle the 'glims' of a 'burster,' Bobe?" exclaimed the Scotch detective.

"I grant ye, my 'cocum pal!" returned Bridger.

As the two sleuth-hounds leaned forward examining the Jew's treasures the Scotch detective suddenly felt a hand placed gently upon his shoulder.

Thinking that the crazy giant had approached, and not wishing him to see the hoard, the Scotch detective whispered to Bridger:

"Turn aside the light! Here's Billy."

Bridger did as requested, and, stepping back, the Scotch detective flung to the safe door.

As he did so he perceived that instead of having felt Billy's hand on his shoulder, as he had supposed, it was the hand of Moses Muggins.

Suddenly reviving, the Jew had perceived the sleuth-hounds at the safe, and dragging himself from the bed, had approached them.

"My God! would you rob old Moses! Moses vat is so good to all de boys?" he ejaculated in a whisper, wringing his hands in agony, and tears rolling down his haggard face.

"No, Moses. We are not 'burstors.' This is what we are!"

As he spoke the Scotch detective displayed his badge.

The Jew's eyes glared wildly, and he tottered back in terror as he realized that his visitors were detectives.

To his fancy it had been better had they proved thieves.

"If I know it I would not resist you," he gasped. "Any way, nothing have I done. But rather than you should make me idle trouble I vill pay you—yea, I vill pay you richly.

"Vait," he added, staggering toward the cot on which Sammy lay. "I vill send for Rachel. I could not talk. I vas nearly dead. She shall intercede vid you for me. She shall make vid you terms to let me off easy."

Then he began to tug at Sammy's clothes, as if to arouse him.

"Sammy! did you hear?" he ejaculated. "Go, fetch Rachel. Get quick up, Sammy!"

But although Sammy opened his eyes and grunted by way of a response he made no effort to arise from the cot.

"Vat should I do? Sammy vas near dead, too," gasped Moses giving over his effort to arouse Sammy, and staggering aside from the cot.

Then his eyes fell upon "Silly" Billy, who was in the act of pinning open poor Kaiser's left eye, so as to give it a natural expression.

Muggins evidently did not know that the dog was dead, and the spectacle of a man quietly poking pins through his skin without a murmur from the fierce brute seemed to turn his bewildered brain.

Clasping his hands to his head he cried out in a hoarse whisper:

"Oh, my God! vat vas it? vat vas it? Vas I sure crazy? Or did I dream? Or did I dream?"

As he spoke he fell back upon a chair near the writing-desk, on which burned the lamp.

"No, Moses, you don't dream," said Bridger, taking from his pocket the bill made at the Broadway detective agency, and approaching the desk upon which Muggins leaned. "This is an expense bill of three robberies from the person which you caused this silly man to do, and the 'swag' of which you pocketed. The amount is twenty-two hundred and fifty dollars."

"Vell, vell—say nothing," interrupted Muggins. "I vill pay you right away if you say it."

"You will pay me nothing. I don't touch a dollar of your money," returned Bridger, throwing the expense bill on the desk before the trembling Jew. "But there, I leave you the bill. At its head you will see printed the address of the Bower Detective Agency. If by to-morrow night you send your daughter Rachel with twenty-two hundred and fifty dollars, and that bill to them, they will ask her

no questions, and you will have no further trouble from us. If you do not do it—the State shall furnish you and Sammy a suit of stripes.”

“But I vill do it. I vill do it. Sure I vill!” quoth Muggins.

“See then that you do it. And remember if you don’t—”

And, with his hand raised to impress the threat, Bridger passed from the room toward the stair-way, whither the Scotch detective and Billy had preceded him.

Bridger banged the door behind him, and the two sleuth-hounds paused a moment without listening.

On the instant Muggins tottered to his feet, and, approaching the door, turned the key in the lock, and shot the bolt to its place.

“Tiefs! robbers! loafers!” he cried. “Could I not vish to my God I killed you! dat de dog tore you to shreds and tatters apart before my eyes.”

“Vat is de matter, Kaiser?” he added, turning suddenly toward the carcass of the dead dog, which Billy had succeeded in placing in a life-like attitude in the box. “Could you know de silly fellow so vell, Kaiser! Ha! I see! Kaiser vas dead—dead!”

“My vatchful Kaiser! My safe, good vatch-dog vas dead! Tiefs! robbers! loafers! But my moneys, my moneys! Let me see if all vas right vid de safe! Oh, I vas ruined! ruined! I know I vas ruined!”

A moment later the safe door swung open, and the sleuth-hounds heard the Jew fumbling over his treasures, as they turned to ascend the stair-way.

CHAPTER XXXIX.)

RACHEL’S LOVE AND TROUBLE.)

On reaching the first hall-way, Bridger hastened to release the captive, Rachel, while the Scotch detective and Billy continued to ascend to the assistance of Annette and Meg in their departure.

Opening the door and turning on the light, Bridger found that Rachel had wisely remained as she had been placed, and had thus avoided the torture which would have followed an attempt to escape the bonds.

He speedily cut the strong hempen cords from her limbs, removed the gag from her mouth, and lifted her gently from the bed.

She appeared to be angry, and sobbed incoherently as the detective assisted her to an easy-chair by the stove.

"And now tell me vat have you done?" she said, as she became more composed. "Have you arrested de tief and de vimin up de stair?"

"Yes," returned Bridger, "my brother officer is now bringing them down."

"Dat vas good—I like me dat! I vant no such beoples by me. But tell me, vas you going to take vid you my fadder and my uncle?"

"No, not to night. They have promised to return some stolen property to-morrow, and we have let them off until we see what they will do about it."

"Vell, you had some fight vid them and de dog, eh? I heard shots and de dog barking."

"Yes, your father and uncle fired the shots, but were overpowered, choked a little, and the dog was killed."

"And you say my fadder vas choked—but not bad—he could talk?"

"Yes—he desired a moment ago that you should go down stairs to him."

"Vell, I could also stay up stairs, and vill!" exclaimed Rachel, tossing her head as if she believed that a fraction of the balance of power in the Muggins family had there its seat. "And I vas now glad by de whole business. If de dog vas dead he should be dead before such dog vas born. And my fadder act so long like an old fool, I hope he got good sense knocked into his head by dis racket."

"I hope so, Rachel," assented Bridger. "He is certainly rich enough to live differently."

"Dat's vat it is—a Jewish man vas never rich enough. De richer he gets de poorer he feels. A long while my fadder has plenty of money, and could be honest and live well—have no tiefs no detectives, no nothing go wrong. But everyting vid him is money, money—and his good, safe watch-dog, Kaiser. Ha, ha! vell, I feel safer ven dat good, safe watch-dog vas dead."

"I should think," suggested Bridger, "he should have a good strong young man about the house if he fears robbery."

"And so I tink. Vy, I myself could get married often. I have now a quite nice young German man, vat is by trade a tailor. He vants me bad to marry vid him. Sure, of course, he vas not a Jew—but I vant nothing more vid such people vot knows nothing but 'monish,' 'monish.' And my fellow have such a nice name!"

"What is his name?" asked Bridger.

"His name vas Carl Ringle and he vas just as nice as vat his name is."

"And have you spoken to your father about it?"

"Quite often have I said to my fadder after vorking at housework so long by him he should give me a little start vid de young man so ve might be married."

"And what did he say?"

"Vy would you believe it he says, 'Rachel, if you vant to vear clothes, ain't it, and eat grub, ain't it, stay right here by your fadder, Moses Muggins. But if you vant to go naked, beg, starve—get married. Moreover,' he would say, 'if you vasn't good enough looking, Rachel, ain't it, to marry a rich Jewish husband, ain't it, vy, I tink too much of myself, ain't it, to buy you a poor German von.' "

"He wouldn't have it, then?"

"No, and he make me vorse yet mad. He would say, 'De poor house vas made for fools and de children of fools, ain't it, and if you would go away and get married, ain't it, soon come you vere all de fools go. But, he would say, 'I vant you not to say to the poor-master you vas Rachel, daughter of Moses Muggins—for I go right away by him and swear your name vas Bridget O'Ho—Ho—Ho—something, Irish name.'

"Such tings I suffer, oh!" added Rachel. "And so I vas glad you come by de house to-night and teach my fadder such lesson. And, mind vat I told you, I finish de business for him if he vant to make me a slave all de vile, have me tied up by strange mens by his doings, call me Bridget O'Ho—Ho—Ho—someting, Irish name, ain't it—I should squak in de court on him, if he gives me not a little start, and Carl Ringle!"

At that moment the Scotch detective rapped upon the door without, and called to Bridger that all were in the hall-way and in readiness for departure.

Bidding them set forth at once, Bridger assisted Rachel to her feet, and bade her accompany him to the door, that she might secure it after him.

This she did with some effort on account of her benumbed limbs, but when Bridger parted with her at the door way with the wish that things would soon turn right for her and Carl, she smiled very pleasantly, and bade him good-night.

CHAPTER XL.

"OH, MISSUS MEG, YOU DOES LOOK NICE!"

On reaching the street, Bridger perceived the Scotch detective arm in arm with Annette, walking briskly toward Chatham square, followed by Meg and Billy, the latter bearing the baggage.

Stepping from the door-step, he speedily joined them.

At Chatham square a cab was secured, the satchel and bundles which Billy carried placed therein, and then the party separated.

The Scotch detective, Annette, and Meg turned toward the mile-level of millinery stores on Division street, with the avowed purpose, as Fandon expressed it, of procuring Annette a fashionable hat in lieu of the huge salad bowl and veil concern which she wore.

Meanwhile Bridger escorted the crazy giant first to a "moist goods" establishment on Chatham square, thence to a clothing emporium, and thence to a hatter, shoemaker and tonsorial artist respectively.

A half hour's time sufficed to perform the tour, and when Bridger turned again with his charge toward the waiting cab Billy's appearance was wonderfully changed for the better.

The tailor, hatter, shoemaker, and barber had changed him from the uncouth simpleton, so that he might readily have passed for an overgrown countryman on a junketing excursion to New York.

Barely had "Silly" Billy deposited the satchel, containing his cast-off clothes and new underwear, in the cab when Meg dawned upon the scene, bearing numerous bundles.

The patronage of the battalion of millinery and dress-making stores on Division street had far outreached the proposed purchase of the hat.

Meg's head was surmounted by a rakish, brigand hat, and as her black eyes, shapely features, and neat fat-and-forty form, incased in a costly fall wrap, appeared in the flare of the street lamp, she was by no means an uncomely female.

At all events it seemed so to the crazy giant's eyes, for he hastened gallantly forward to relieve the lady of the bundle she carried, and exclaimed as he did so:

"Oh, Missus Meg, you does look nice!"

"And so does you, Billy, ye villain!" returned Meg.

Then waving her hand toward the cab in as imperious a manner as if she were the proprietress of a Bowery concert hall about to drive out in her own outfit, she added, to the amusement of the cabman, who stood grinning by:

"But don't be standin' gapin' there devourin' me appearance wid yer eyes. But, wid some assumption of gintility, place me bundles widin the barouchay, and lind me yer assistance to enter. And do ye be mindin' to kape your tongue quiet as we do be ridin' along, and pay particular attention that I don't want any more of yer he, he, he's! or yer hi, he, hoes! until afther we have doined at the Caravansay."

The Scotch detective, who had loitered longer than suited Bridger's patience, now strolled leisurely under the street lamp toward the cab, Annette leaning upon his arm, and her bright blue eyes beaming very happily upon him from under the rim of a new purchase.

Annette's gentle form was also incased in a costly fall wrap of rare finish, and a more winsome little lady could not be imagined than was she as the Scotch detective assisted her to a place in the cab.

So, at least, thought Fandon as he turned toward Bridger.

"Fandon," said Bridger, somewhat curtly, "there are times for everything, and you should remember that although you have safely won a charming little woman to your arms there is still much pressing work to be done. So don't permit Annette's beauty to act on you as another East Indian sleep-glass just yet."

"Pardon my delay, Bobe," returned the Scotch detective, "for, as you once told me you had never been in love, I can offer you no excuse. What's to be done?"

"It is now nearly eight. At half-past ten a train leaves for Alton, and we must all go by that train. You have ample time to drive to the hotel, present Dr. Macy with his newly found grandchild, and be all dinnered and ready to enter the cab for the depot, when I arrive, at nine."

"And where are you for?"

"Goucher sold the sand-bag, and we must take him along as a witness."

"Is that necessary?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Videre has money, has fixed things fine, and will doubt-

less bring powerful influence to bear. We must offset these things with every point in hand."

"Will Goucher accompany you?"

"I think so."

"You may have trouble. Had I not better stick by you?"

"No."

"But if you should have trouble?"

"I will take care of number one. Hurry up now, there's not a moment to lose."

"All right; at nine you will find us ready," returned the Scotch detective, as he sprang to a place in the coach, and the cabman drove off.

CHAPTER XLI.

BRIDGER'S ADVENTURE IN THE DEN.

A moment later Bridger was rolling along the Bowery in a second coach toward "Boss" Goucher's den in Delancy street.

As before stated, Hoffman and Scott, the famous Chicago detectives, and Bridger, had once upon a time arrested Goucher in the city named for burglary.

Bridger therefore felt that Goucher would recognize him so soon as he entered his premises.

He was prepared to offer him a pecuniary inducement and immunity from arrest did he accompany the party to Alton, and identify Pere Videre, should the man in custody prove to be the person who purchased the sand-bag from him.

He supposed that Goucher would consent to do so, nor did he anticipate trouble.

He did not afterward regret his visit, however, for it furnished him a clew to the whereabouts of some of those persons who had suddenly disappeared in New York, and were never heard from again.

Had they been struck down on the sidewalk by the highwaymen, or murdered in their rooms by the burglar the facts would have become known.

Even had their bodies been cast in the sewers or the river, there had existed a reasonable possibility that the morgue would one day offer their remains in evidence of the manner in which foul play had claimed them victims.

This clew assured Bridger that many of these missing persons had been allured aside by confidence sharps, such as bunco men, saw-dust operators, and hand-shakers.

These people are in reality the most dangerous of metropolitan criminals.

They have as much murder in their hearts, and far more shrewdness in their brains, than the burglar or footpad, and are usually graduates from that class of thieves.

Assuming the role of friendship, they entice the unwary victim to where all things are in readiness to their ends, and where the eye of the law does not reach.

If the dupe gives up his money to the "racket" they spread for him, he escapes with its loss.

If, however, it is found that he possesses a large sum, and he detects, or revolts on, their game there is a chance that his name will appear placarded as a missing man.

The police will be notified to look him up, his friends will proclaim his mortality, and their several theories as to the cause of their grief; hotels, morgues, prisons, asylums, roads, rivers, highways and byways will be searched again and again in vain; and all the while his body will lie securely buried many feet beneath the noisy, hurrying city above.

* * * * *

When the cab pulled up at the curb on the opposite side of the street from Goucher's den, Bridger stepped to the sidewalk, and glanced across at the low, two-story brick house he was about to enter.

Its windows were heavily shaded and dimly lighted, and the place looked so much to Bridger like a notorious thieves' den on Kearney street, in San Francisco, in which he had had a desperate encounter, that, impulsively, a feeling implying caution possessed him.

He bade the cabman, whom he had employed before, to throw open the outside door of the cab ready for a hasty entry, and to remain on his box, and drive off, at speed, to the St. Nicholas Hotel, whenever he bade him go.

Then, crossing the street, he opened the hall-way door, entered, and listened.

The hum of the bar-room, filled with thieves, alone reached his ears.

Feeling his way in the darkness, he cautiously ascended the stair-way, and approached the door of the room where the sand-bag transaction had taken place.

A ray of light, penetrating from the worn wicket, showed that it was occupied.

Placing his eye to the crevice, the sleuth-hound perceived that "Tom, the Frog," and Goucher were within.

"Tom, the Frog," sat at the left of the large round table,

while Goucher, who had barely approached it, stood between the candle burning thereon and Bridger at the door.

The men wore hats and overcoats, as if they had been on the point of going forth.

In his left hand Goucher held a long, tin tube, from which he blew forth a small tightly rolled bit of paper.

As it fell upon the table, "Tom, the Frog," seized it, and Goucher said :

"What's he want?"

The bit of paper proved to be a note which had been passed up through some peep-hole from below, and "Tom, the Frog," read it.

"The 'Fork' says," said he, "there's a 'queer' cab has pulled up over the way, and a chap that looks like a 'fly-cop' is on the stairs coming up."

Bridger rapped loudly upon the door.

After a moment's delay the door opened, and Goucher's burly form appeared thereat.

"How are you, Goucher?" said the detective, extending his hand.

"Why, halloo, Bridger! how do you do?" returned Goucher, clasping the sleuth-hound's hand warmly. "I haven't seen you since the Chicago scrape. But what's up now? Hope no one about this ranch is wanted to-night?"

"No one, Goucher. I have only come to see you on a matter of business."

"That's all? Then come in and sit down."

He turned as he spoke, passed to the right about the table, and dropped leisurely to a seat at its rear.

Bridger closed the door, exchanged nods with "Tom, the Frog," and seated himself upon a chair to the right of the table, to which Goucher pointed.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Goucher, "rough chase you boys had to put old Goucher behind the bars that night, eh, Bridger? But I can tell you one thing, right here—you'll never have that little pleasure again. Reformed, sir! reformed, sir! No more 'crooked' work for me! Keepin' a 'boosing ken,' makin' money, livin' high, and when death calls home old Goucher, he'll not write with his bony finger on the tombstone: 'Here lies a convict.' And how's Hoff and Scott getting on?"

"Same as ever."

"Ah! they're a hard pair to get over—the hardest men by long odds along the lakes. And when they get onto a

poor 'trick' the game might as well be called done. And how have things been with yourself since, Bridger?"

"So-so."

"Workin' for the government, Pinkerton, or who?"

"At present I'm helpin' a man from Scotland Yard on a murder case."

"English case, eh?"

"Yes; my business with you is regarding it."

"What the duse do I know about an English murder case? I was born right here in New York. Never was across the pond in my life."

"I'll tell you. The man you sold that sand-bag to some days ago is in custody over in Jersey for killing a man, and I want you to identify him."

"Sand-bag—me!" cried Goucher, rising from his chair excitedly.

"Goucher," returned Bridger, quietly, "you know me, and that I would make no such assertion unless I knew what I was talking about."

"Well, what do you know? And how do you know it?" demanded Goucher, resuming his seat, and exchanging a glance of intelligence with "Tom, the Frog."

"I happened to be 'shadowing' that squeaking Englishman who your man 'Jack, the Fork,' walked in here to get 'sawdust,' and overheard the whole business from outside in the hall-way. He paid you five hundred dollars for the bag."

"Well—what have I got to do with it?"

"Only to identify the man, if it is he, and say that he came to you professing to be in fear of foul play from a friend, and wanted a weapon which he could destroy if he was forced to use it in his own defense."

"And you say the 'bloke' did get away with a man, with the sand-bag?"

"It would seem so. And as it happened near a railroad track he will endeavor, in the absence of the weapon, to show that his victim fell from a train."

"And don't people fall from trains?"

"They do—but if this man did fall, as I say, you know that he fell from a sand-bag."

"And how do you make out I know he fell from the bag?"

"And the price paid for the weapon was enough to show any man the use it was to go to, and moreover I heard you and your men say as much in the hall-way after the sale."

"You heard so?"

"Yes."

"Then you want me to go over with you to Jersey, and have Jersey justice put a noose about my neck as an accessory before the fact, eh?"

"I have made a mistake. The man is imprisoned at Alton, Pennsylvania."

"Well, it's all the same where he is. I am here."

"It's no crime to sell a weapon, man, and I give you my oath that you shall not see the inside of a prison, that I will shield you, you shall not be in any way implicated, and shall be well paid for the service."

"Well, now, right here, I give you my oath that I don't want you to shield me, that you don't implicate me, and that I don't go on no such racket from New York."

Goucher's tones were loud and violent, and he glared fiercely at Bridger as he spoke.

Bridger thought he detected him making a motion, as if outstretching his right foot forcibly upon the floor.

As he did so, "Tom, the Frog's" hands stretched lazily forth upon the table, in close proximity to the candle.

A slight draft of chilly air, with a tainted, cellar odor, which the detective had not before noticed, caused Bridger to cast down his eyes as if in the act of ejecting a spittle, and he noticed that a crack extended between two of the boards more marked than the other joinings.

This crack ran entirely across the floor close to the legs of the table, and four feet from the wall at the detective's back.

The suspicion that he was sitting on a trap struck Bridger at once.

Placing his left hand on the table, so that he might readily grasp its edge, he trust his left foot beyond the crack, and rested his weight upon it.

Then gesticulating with his right over the table toward Goucher, as if anxious to impress his words upon him, he said:

"Goucher, I did not anticipate trouble. In fact, I thought I was doing you a kindness in making you the offer I have. But as you take it differently, you may blunder yourself into the trouble you fear."

"Not much I won't, my 'cocum covey.' And this is the reason why."

On the instant, "Tom, the Frog's" hands snuffed out the candle, leaving the room in black darkness, and the floor, with a dull crash, gave away beneath Bridger's chair.

CHAPTER XLII.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

The chair upon which Bridger had been sitting slipped from the opening trap, and fell into its black depths.

Had it not been for Bridger's athletic training nothing would have saved him from following the chair.

Springing forward in the black darkness, at the instant the trap was sprung, he succeeded in throwing himself forward across the table.

As he did so his hands came in contact with those of "Tom, the Frog," as he was in the act of removing them from the snuffed candle.

Seizing the burglar's wrists with an iron grip, and bracing himself strongly upon the table, Bridger swung him from his chair to the left and around toward the trap.

The sleuth-hound's intention was to hurl him into it, but in this he failed.

It was all the work of an instant, and both "Tom, the Frog," and Bridger realized that it was a struggle for life.

A second effort, with all his strength, brought the burglar's body directly over the trap, when he suddenly wrenched loose his right hand, and clutching at Bridger's throat, succeeded in grasping the collar of his shirt, and the upper part of his snug-fitting vest.

By this hold he hung dangling over the trap, his left hand being held firmly in Bridger's.

He now began to struggle in the effort to scramble over the sleuth-hound and reach the table.

Bridger was lying face downward directly across the table, his head and shoulders above the trap, and his legs extending toward the chair on which his antagonist had been sitting.

"Tom, the Frog's" struggles were gradually and surely forcing both men toward the opening beneath.

With his right hand, Bridger braced himself back upon the smooth table-top as best he could, himself sliding inch by inch toward what seemed certain death.

One thing was in his favor—in the plunge the burglar would be beneath, and receive the brunt of the fall.

At the very moment when it seemed that both were plunging helplessly downward "Tom, the Frog," called to Goucher for help.

On the instant Bridger felt his legs strongly grasped from behind, and Goucher's voice cried out :

"Put him over to his bed, my boy Tommy !"

It was evident that he thought he had hold of "Tom, the Frog's" legs, and that it was Bridger who was holding on above the trap.

It was a fortunate mistake, and gave the sleuth-hound liberty to use his right hand.

Even as Goucher spoke Bridger drew from his pocket a pair of steel manacles, and making "knucklers" of them, dealt "Tom, the Frog's" hand at his neck a powerful blow. The buttons flew from the sleuth-hound's vest, his collar burst wide, and his shirt-front ripped down, but the grasp of the burglar was broken, and he fell, bringing up with a dull thud in the dark depths beneath.

"Good boy Tommy !" cried Goucher, who evidently believed that Bridger was safe at the bottom of the trap.

An instant later he learned differently.

Barely had he uttered the exclamation, when the sleuth-hound swung himself about on the table and seized his wrists, snapping the manacles on them as he did so.

As Goucher released his hold from Bridger's legs, the sleuth-hound pushed him forcibly back, sprang from the table, and struck a match.

Ere the astounded villain could realize what had befallen him, Bridger had relit the candle, and held a cocked revolver at his head.

He glared fiercely at the detective, started back and trembled visibly.

"Goucher," said Bridger, "you have made it a plain play of life against life, and if by word, sign, or act, you refuse my will, or if you attempt to give a signal, hold back, or make one motion in any way to escape me, I'll drop you dead on the instant !"

The cowed villain looked at the sleuth hound's determined eyes, and muttered :

"Bridger, I cave !"

But Bridger knew that the man did not mean it.

"Your life is in your own hands ; go on !" he said, and he pushed the burly burglar toward the door.

Opening it, the sleuth-hound pointed toward the stairway, which was lit by the rays of the candle.

Goucher made no resistance, but walked slowly from the

room, Bridger holding the revolver to his head, and urging him on.

When the manacled burglar and his captor had almost reached the bottom of the stair-way, a shrill whistle sounded at if from the rear of the bar-room.

On the instant the hum of voices became subdued to an ominous hush.

A moment later a tumult of yells, mingled with the noise of overturning chairs and tables, and hurrying feet, came from the bar.

"Jack, the Fork," had discovered that it was "Tom, the Frog," and not the "fly-cop" that had fallen through the trap.

Goucher, the "King of the Ken," was known to be in danger of arrest, and a rescue had been called for.

Just as the sleuth-hound had forced his prisoner to the hall-way door, swung it open, and placed his revolver in his pocket, so that his hands might be free, the bar-room mob pushed forth into the rear hall-way.

Goucher paused upon the threshold.

Had his hands been free he would have grasped the sides of the door frame.

He made an effort to stagger and fall to gain time.

Grasping his coat at the nape of the neck with his left hand, Bridger clutched the seat of his trousers in his right, and, exerting his strength to the utmost, sent him on a Spanish run across the sidewalk and street.

The cab stood at the opposite curb, its street door open, and the cabman ready to drive off.

Pushing the king of the den before him, Bridger landed him at the cab's door just as the howling mob, headed by "Jack, the Fork," and the burly bartender, rushed upon the street.

Goucher feigned to make a misstep at entering the cab, and fell forward head and shoulders upon its bottom.

Seizing him by the legs, Bridger forced him heels over head within, and entering himself, bade the driver go.

The cabman lashed his horses, and they bounded forward, the mob running after and clutching at the flying wheels.

Around the corner to the next street, across that street toward the Bowery, the cab flew along, pursued by the rabble, who had raised the cry of "stop, thief!"

A policeman stood talking with a ward detective, under a corner street lamp, as the cab turned into the Bowery.

Hearing the cry of "stop, thief!" and the hurrying foot-

steps of the cab's pursuers, they turned toward the cross-street just as "Jack, the Fork," and the burly bartender rushed into the glare of the lamp, at the head of the mob.

Knowing well the character of these men, they detained them, while the motley crowd surged about, and the policeman added to the uproar by rapping sharply upon the sidewalk for aid with his club.

Ere it had been explained to the officers that the "thief" "wanted" had passed in the cab, that vehicle had been lost among the many of its class, and was heading safely toward the St. Nicholas Hotel.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE DRIVE TO THE FERRY.

On the way to the hotel, the Scotch detective briefly recounted the story of Dr. Macy and of Alfonse Godot's wanderings, and the evidence pointing to the murder of the latter by Videre.

Annette was thus prepared to meet her grand parent, the gentle old man who so anxiously awaited her coming.

Filled with happy anticipations for the future, it could not be expected that the maiden might grieve deeply at the supposed loss of a father she had never known.

She sincerely trusted, however, that the men held at Pittsburgh were her father and Videre, and that the dead man found at Alton would prove to have been a stranger of like name.

The scene that ensued at the hotel was highly affecting.

Dr. Macy's joy at suddenly finding the rescued girl in his arms was almost childish in its exuberance.

He declared that in her fair face and form Heaven had restored to him the lost Alice, and he thanked God, while the tears coursed down his wrinkled cheeks, for this evidence of His pardon for the great wrong his pride had caused him to commit.

When his excitement had somewhat abated, and the Scotch detective informed him of the supposed fate of Alfonse Godot, he also joined Annette in the hope that her father was yet alive, and both were eager for the proposed journey.

A hasty dinner was partaken of, at which "Silly" Billy distinguished himself in a way that St. Nicholas Hotel waiters will never forget, and, when the cab containing

Bridger and his prisoner pulled up at the hotel, the Scotch detective stood in waiting on the sidewalk.

While the mob of thieves had pursued, Bridger had sat quietly grasping the chain of the manacles that held Goucher's wrists in his left hand, and clutching the lapel of his coat with his right.

When the cab had passed safely into the Bowery he relaxed his hold, and tied his handkerchief about Goucher's forehead, which was bruised and bleeding.

This done, Goucher broke the silence by demanding, in a surly tone, whether he was being taken to the station-house or to the train for Alton.

Bridger well knew that his prisoner was well versed in points of criminal law.

He knew that Bridger had technically no right to arrest him without a warrant for an offense not committed against the general government, or to take him to another State without a requisition.

He understood, however, that his attempt upon the detective's life had constituted an offense for which Bridger could deliver him to custody in the city, and he feared the result might look toward an investigation of the murderous trap in his den.

It had, without doubt, done work which, if followed up, would consign him to the gallows.

Detectives at times feel bound to strain every point to bring about the success of the case they have in hand, and, under the circumstances, Bridger felt forced to make a compromise.

It was agreed between the two men that if Bridger did not cause Goucher's imprisonment on any charge the latter would go to Alton as the detective desired, and ere the cab drew up at the hotel Bridger had removed the manacles from the burglar's wrists.

"Did you find your man, Bobe?" demanded the Scotch detective, as he perceived Bridger through the open window in the cab's door.

"Yes, I have the witness all right. Are you ready to go?" returned Bridger.

"All ready and waiting this half hour. And, by the way, we have but forty minutes left to catch the train. I was beginning to fear that you were having some trouble, and was on the point of having a look around myself for you."

"Then lose no time, Fandon. Get the party into the car-

riage, and instruct your driver to drive to the Pennsylvania Railroad ferry."

A moment later the Scotch detective led forth Annette, Meg, Dr. Macy, and "Silly" Billy from the ladies' entrance of the hotel.

The three first named, accompanied by the Scotch detective, entered the cab which had waited without at their service, Billy being consigned to the cab in which Bridger rode.

The crazy giant hesitated about entering, but Meg's order hurried his movements, and when he recognized Bridger he dropped into the cab's front seat, assured that all was well.

The two vehicles then rattled off toward the ferry at a lively gait.

"'E! 'e! 'e!" simpered Billy, as the coach rolled on, shifting his hands about uneasily, and evidently desiring to become better acquainted with his surroundings. "We 'ad a bloomin' 'ot dinner hinside the 'otel—soup, turkey, hice-cream, han' the like, 'e! 'e! 'e! I say, Master Bridger, who's 'e got there w' ye, han' 'igh tober?"

"No, Billy," returned Bridger. "This gentleman is Mr. Goucher. He goes with us as a witness to identify Mr. Videre."

"To identify Mr. Videre? 'E! 'e! Hi allus thought Mr. Videre's squealin' voice would hidentify hitself, 'e! 'e! But, come to be thinkin', hive 'eard of Mr. Goucher before, 'e! 'e!"

"Heard of me? Where?" demanded Goucher.

"Hive 'eard of Mr. Goucher in the 'ouse of Mr. Muggins, 'e! 'e! Hi say though, Master Bridger, Muggins' dog won't be so troublesome hany more, will 'e?"

"What do you mean?" demanded Goucher, glancing from Billy to Bridger with an air of suspicion, which the detective could not at the time fully account for.

"Nothing, Goucher," said Bridger, touching his head to indicate Billy's ailment. "Billy here is a little off, and as it happens, has been rooming in Muggins' house lately. He was wanted as a witness against Videre, and we were forced to enter Muggins' house this evening and get him out. We had a lively brush with the Jews, and Billy killed their dog."

"Hi should say hi killed 'im. Ay, Master Bridger," simpered the crazy giant. "Hi was bound to, for 'e made Misses Meg much worry, and hevery time when hi come 'ome o' night, when hi would rap on Misses Rachel's win-

dow to let me hin, 'e would growl as hif 'e would want to heat me up. But 'e's dead now, bean't 'e, Master Bridger? 'E! 'e! See-re-go!"

"I'm not surprised that you had a fight if you entered Muggins' house," quoth Goucher. "I know the man, of course, but he never would permit me to enter his home, and that dog was a terrible beast—a regular house-watcher, imported from Germany."

"But 'e's hexported now, bean't 'e, Master Bridger? 'E! 'e! See ree-go!" quoth Billy.

"And how did you manage to enter the house, if I may ask?" said Goucher.

"Oh, easy enough," returned Bridger. "The signal, as Billy said, seemed to be a tap on the window at the head of the steps. Rachel, the daughter, opened the door in response; we secured her in her room, searched the house, found what we wanted, and thanks to Billy, escaped the dog."

"Well, all I've got to say is," commented Goucher, "you did a nervy thing. To my certain knowledge, there are 'fly-cops' and 'crooks' in New York who had liked to've entered there, but dared not do so. Muggins always kept his house locked, and that brute's growl, as it sounded in the clothing store from the rear room, was enough to make a man fear to enter farther. Of course, you know that Muggins is a rich fence, and—"

"Hi should think 'e was a rich 'fence,'" chimed in Billy. "'E's got a safe back there as is crammed full of money han' gold'en 'boodle,' 'e! 'e! 'e! Hi'de liked many 'e time to 'ave 'elped crack Mr. Mugginses' safe for 'im, 'e! 'e! See-ree-go!"

"The old miser?" exclaimed Goucher. "It's the likes of him that reap all the reward of the dark deeds of crooked men. And it would serve him only too well to lose to some of them a bunch of his 'boodle.' "

As "Silly" Billy continued to narrate his experience in Muggins' house Goucher listened intently, and Bridger did not fail to notice that his humor became better all the while.

In fact, the detective instinctively felt that Goucher had learned points which he intended to use.

At length, just before the cab pulled up at the ferry, he slapped Bridger in a patronizing way upon the shoulder, and became profuse in his apologies as to the attempt upon his life.

The trap, he explained, was in the place when he first took it.

He doubted not that it had done bad work in times past, but his first attempt to use it was as Bridger had witnessed.

He had tried to kill him, he admitted.

But he should remember that he had served eighteen years of his life in prison, was now an old man, and that he firmly believed at the time that he was after him on a charge that might consign him to a prison again.

"And rather than go there again," he added, "I would kill myself. So then how can you blame me for trying to kill you, believing as I did?"

CHAPTER XLIV.

A CORONER'S INQUEST.

On reaching the ferry the Scotch detective procured seven passage tickets for Alton, and the party were soon comfortably distributed in the four sections of the Pittsburgh sleeping-car.

By the kindness of the train's conductor, Bridger dispatched two telegrams at the first telegraph station.

One informed the coroner at Alton that the detectives and their witnesses were on the way.

The second conveyed the same information to Detective Hoffman at Pittsburgh, and asked him to bring his prisoners to Alton by the first east-bound train.

At nine in the morning the party from New York stepped from the train at the Alton depot, and found the sheriff of the county waiting to receive them.

He informed them that Detective Hoffman and his prisoners had already arrived, and awaited their coming at the coroner's office.

After breakfasting at the railway hotel the party repaired thither.

The street in front of the large frame building in which the office was situated was crowded with people.

By some effort the sheriff opened a gap in the eager throng, through which the party reached a side entrance.

The sheriff led to a large room in the rear part of the building, where a fire burned cheerily.

By request of the detectives, Annette, Meg, Dr. Macy, Goucher, and "Silly" Billy remained here, while they accompanied the sheriff to the office adjoining.

It was a large, carpetless, barn-like room.

Upon four chairs at its center rested an undertaker's ice-box, in which, covered by a coarse canvas, lay the dead man's body.

Seated near here the coroner, the jury, the two physicians, and the railway's attorney.

A dozen railroad laborers, hats off, stood respectfully aside.

To the left, by themselves, sat Detective Hoffman and his two prisoners.

The men were dressed fashionably, and wore a defiant air of injured innocence.

In the one the Scotch detective and Bridger instantly recognized the red-bearded, squeaking-voiced Englishman who had purchased the sand-bag in Goucher's den.

His fellow was a thin little man, wearing a long black beard, and coughing incessantly.

His assurance was interesting, and he ogled everything and everybody through his fashionable single-barreled eyeglass, as if all present were but swine as compared to himself.

As the detectives and the sheriff entered, the coroner, attorney, and Hoffman sprang to their feet and approached them.

Hoffman's hand clutched Bridger's, and Bridger introduced the Scotch detective.

"I'll give you the pointer," whispered Hoffman in Bridger's ear. "that this man Videre has sent fifty telegrams to Washington, and a dozen cablegrams to England, since I've had him in charge, and the British Minister has enlisted the good-will of the railway company and its attorney to secure his release."

"Gentlemen," said the attorney, coming forward, "an outrage has been committed in the arrest of these gentlemen—two English tourists, indorsed by a number of the leading firms in London—and I have special instructions from Washington to secure their release."

"Are you the coroner?" asked the Scotch detective.

"No, sir; I am the railway company's attorney at this place—"

"And I am the coroner," said a portly, gray-haired man, stepping forward.

"A word in private with you," quoth the Scotch detective, and the detectives and the coroner retired aside.

The attorney dropped to a seat near the prisoner's, and held a whispered consultation.

A moment later, with an air of authority, the coroner strode to his desk, and seated himself behind it.

"We will now proceed to business," he said.

"One moment," interposed the attorney. "I beg, sir, that you will not place undue stress on what these detective officers have to say to you. My clients, I understand, are the custodians of a vast estate in England, and it is their belief that a scheme has been set on foot by conspirators and also claimants to wrest valuable properties from them. The large interests at stake would warrant these operators to employ detectives to traduce the character of my clients, and you yourself well understand, sir, that by all report a detective's cunning is only outstripped by the cupidity of the fraternity. I beg of you, sir, to demand proof, and that you will not cause our sheriff to imprison these gentlemen on foreign evidence such as these gentlemen will endeavor to offer."

"Proofs we want and must have," returned the coroner. "And you can rest assured that my action will not be a hasty one. The jury are here waiting to receive evidence, and we will proceed to take evidence, beginning with that of the section-boss, who found the body. Peter Horton?"

"Here, sir!" and the man stepped forward.

The coroner administered the usual oath, and said:

"Horton, go on, and tell us what you know about this body."

"I wor goin' up the mountain yesterday mornin' wid the boys on the hand-truck to work on the thrack, whin in the cut above I found the body. The man was lying to the right of the thrack wid his head against the bank, and doubled up loike as if he had fallen from the thrain."

"The express train had just passed west, had it not?" asked the attorney.

"Yis, sor."

"Well, what did you do with the body?" asked the coroner.

"We put it on the truck, brought it to the depot, and delivered it into yer honor's hands, sor."

"One word," quoth the attorney. "Did you see any weapon, club or anything lying near?"

"None, sor."

"Not even a bloody stone, or anything that might have been used in striking the body?"

"No, sir. There wor no blood. The back part of the neck and the right side of the head wor much bruised, but there wor no blood."

"Showing conclusively," said the attorney, "that the man fell from the train by accident, and thus met his death."

"I will now call Dr. Luden," continued the coroner, turning to where the doctor sat.

"Doctor, you will please state the result of your inspection of the body."

"I found," returned the doctor, after kissing the book, "that the neck had been dislocated, and that the right side of the head was bruised."

"Were there any bruises on the body?"

"None."

"What is your opinion as to the cause of the man's death?"

"The man was in a very weak state, and thoroughly wasted with pulmonary disease, and, doubtless, in attempting to cross the platforms lost his balance and fell from the train. He evidently struck on the right side of his head, dislocating his neck, and dying instantly."

Dr. Miller, on being called, made a like statement.

"I will now call Alfonse Godot," said the coroner, and the consumptive prisoner arose, and stepped forward grandly. After administering the oath, the coroner continued:

"What is your name, sir?"

"My name is Alfonse Godot."

"Where do you reside?"

"In England."

"Occupation?"

"A gentleman—hic-chew!—of wealth and leisure, sir!"

"You know the gentleman sitting there?" pointing to Videre.

"Yes, sir."

"His name?"

"Pere Videre. He is—hic-chew!—my agent, sir!"

"Did you pass westward in his company on the express train yesterday?"

"No, sir. I met him at the depot at Pittsburgh yesterday, where we were apprehended—hic-chew! hic-chew! hic-chew!—by yonder ruffian."

"Might I ask your business in this country?"

"It is impertinent, sir—hic-chew! hic-chew!—highly impertinent, sir—hic-chew!—but as it seems the custom of the tawdry country to heap either offensive obtrusion or despicable indignity upon—hic-chew! hic-chew!—I suppose I must state that I suffer from a pulmonary complaint, and travel for my health. However, I have been—hic-chew!

hic-chew!—for some years in India, and learned on my return to England that a girl who claims to be my long-lost daughter—family disagreement, you know—resided with some vulgar persons in America, or, bay Jove!—hic-chew! hic-chew!—I should never have ventured to the vulgar country.”

“Your aim is, then, to meet your daughter?”

“Precisely, sir. It was—hic-chew! hic-chew!—arranged that I should meet the vulgar people who claim to have her in charge in Pittsburgh. But I suppose that—hic-chew! hic-chew! the same ruffians who have caused us to be detained have also—hic-chew! hic-chew!—prevented their coming. And I assure you, sir, that so soon as I have my liberty, I propose to—hic-chew! hic-chew!—accompany my agent to Washington, and after laying claim for heavy damages against the authorities of your State through the British Minister, I will—hic-chew! hic-chew! sail at once for England, and let the world know what a miserable blot on Christendom this vulgar—hic-chew! hic-chew!—land is!”

The coroner was a patriotic citizen, and his face became as red as fire, his eyes flashed, and his huge fists doubled, as if he felt like crushing the dignified but insulting invalid.

At this point the Scotch detective asked if he might be permitted to ask the witness a question.

Obtaining the coroner's consent, he said:

“Low bridge! Wilberforce J. St. Clair!”

The dignified invalid started back, trembled violently, and fixed his eyes in a wild stare upon the Scotch detective.

The shock was only momentary, however, for like a veteran he quickly rallied, and turning toward the coroner, demanded:

“What means this paltry ruffian, sir?”

CHAPTER XLV.

THE INQUEST CONCLUDED.

“We will now hear Pere Videre,” said the coroner.

The dignified invalid muttered something about the horrid atrocity and stupid barbarity of American institutions, and resumed his seat with a lofty and injured air, and Pere Videre arose, and stepped forward.

After the form of an oath the coroner said :

"What is your name, sir?"

"My name is Pere Videre," returned the prisoner in the peculiar piccolo voice which the detectives had heard in Goucher's den.

"And your business?"

"I am agent for Alfonse Godot, Esquire."

"That gentleman?"

"Yes, sir."

"You passed westward upon the express train yesterday morning?"

"Yes, sir Mr. Godot had preceded me, and I met him, as per appointment, at Pittsburgh."

The coroner stepped forward, and turned back the canvas cover of the ice-box so as to reveal the calm face of the corpse.

"Did you ever see this face before?" asked the coroner.

Videre glanced hastily toward the face of the dead man, and, with a shudder, answered :

"No."

"Why do you shudder?"

"I am not an undertaker, a physician, or morgue-keeper. A dead man is abhorrent to my nerves."

At this moment the sheriff ushered Goucher into the coroner's presence.

"I would beg, sir," said the Scotch detective, "that you ask the prisoner if he knows this gentleman."

"Do you, sir?" asked the coroner, pointing to Goucher.

"No, sir," returned Videre, bending his cold gray eyes unflinchingly upon Goucher's features.

"Did you not purchase a weapon called a sand-bag from this man in New York recently?" demanded the coroner, sternly.

"You are insulting, sir. I claim my attorney's protection. I will not answer you."

"Please swear this man," said the attorney, indicating Goucher.

The coroner did so.

"Now, tell me, sir, what your charge is against this gentleman?" demanded the attorney.

"I have no charge to make," returned Goucher. "I am here against my will, but I identify that gentleman as a man who came to my house in New York, and desired me to procure him a weapon with which he might defend himself. He said that he was traveling in company with a person whom he feared had planned to attack and knock

him from a running train on his journey, and he wished a weapon which he might destroy should he be forced to use it."

"Monstrous!" exclaimed Videre, angrily.

"Be calm, Mr. Videre," cautioned the attorney.

"Now, sir, you say you sold this gentleman such a weapon?"

"Yes, sir. I sold him a sand-bag which I had lying about as a curiosity, and it was of such a nature that the copper-filings which it contained might be poured forth, and the bag burned."

"How do you identify this gentleman as the purchaser?"

"By his strange voice and general appearance."

"Did you ever see him before he made the purchase?"

"No, sir."

"Are you acquainted with the detective officers near you?"

"I know Detectives Bridger and Hoffman."

"What is your business?"

"I keep a liquor store."

"That will do, sir."

At this point the Scotch detective led Annette, Meg Bolard, Dr. Macy, and "Silly" Billy into the room.

Annette screamed in terror as her eyes rested upon the box containing the corpse, and clung tremblingly in fear to the Scotch detective.

All eyes were directed toward the group.

"Do you know these people?" demanded the coroner, pointing toward them.

"I do not," returned Videre, coolly.

"Och, is it there ye are, Mister Pere Videre, me purty jail-bird, 'Squeeler' Jack Drugo? It's mesilf, Meg Bolard, that knows you thin!"

The crazy giant began to dance and titter, and his face beamed in recognition upon the prisoner.

"'Ow is you, Mr. Videre?" he said. "Hi knows 'im! 'e! 'e! 'e! Why, hanybody would know Mr. Videre, 'e; 'e! 'Is voice hidentifies hitself! e! 'e! See-ree-go!"

"Wait until you are sworn!" roared the coroner, while he glared in astonishment at the antics of "Silly" Billy.

"Swear me thin, and be quick about it," demanded Meg, as she dealt the crazy giant a blow with her hand, and bade him cease his performance.

The coroner swore Meg, and asked her to state what she knew of Videre.

"Know him! Sure, thin, it's mesilf knows him as well

as I know his father, who was for twinty years my own husband."

"Do you say that you are his mother?"

"No, indade. Heaven above saved me that shame."

"Well, what do you know of him?"

"Know av him, is it? I know that he was clerk of the old man Godot's estates in England, av which me husband was the head gardener. And I know that betune the two av them they put up the job to murder old Godot, and thimsilves take the estates. And I know that this man Videre brought this poor 'pig-widgeon' from London to commit the crime and take the blame av it after the two of thim had kidnapped the master's son to sea."

"'E, 'e! We hexported 'im on the bloomin' bark a thousand miles haway, 'e, 'e! din we, Mr. Videre? 'e, 'e, 'e!" simpered "Silly" Billy.

Videre remained cool and undisturbed.

"And I know," continued Meg, "that me ould fagot of a husband wouldn't permit Billy heer to do the murther for fear he would give it away afther. And I know that me husband himself cut the old man's throat, and this man obtained possession of the estates in keeping for the absent son. And there they committed another murder—for the poor deserted woife of the kidnapped son came from the strates of London to old Godot's land—but Heaven above heard her prayer. For whin she fell exhausted at me husband's door-step, and niver spoke afther, but to name the choild, I took the babe to me arms. And there she is now, the thrue owner of the Godot estates, for ye, Pere Videre, and at her soide is Detective Fandon, of the Scotland Yard that's lookin' for ye—lookin' for ye! and who'll have ye soon, Jack Drugo, in yer old lodging-house, Millbank prison. That for ye, ye dirty dog!"

For the first time Videre began to show uneasiness, and he eyed the Scotch detective keenly.

As Meg ended her tirade, and the sheirff led her aside, the dignified invalid suddenly sprang to his feet and approached Annette in a highly dramatic manner.

"Then," he said, "this—this is my long-lost daughter, Annette."

"You!" cried Dr. Macy, confronting the man. "Avaunt! thou base impostor!"

"Down brakes, Wilberforce!" said Bridger, and the dignified invalid sat down.

"Swear this gentleman, please," said the Scotch detective, meaning Dr. Macy.

"Please state," began the coroner, when the old doctor had been sworn, "if you know personally Alfonse Godot?"

"I do. Alfonse Godot married my daughter Alice. I recently accompanied him from Madras to London."

"Is this man Alfonse Godot?" demanded the coroner, pointing toward the dignified invalid.

"He is not."

"Please look at the body and see if you can identify it."

Dr. Macy moved slowly forward, leaning on Bridger's arm, and as if he dreaded the spectacle.

As his eyes fell upon the features of the dead he groaned heavily, clasped his hands to his head in agony of horror, staggered aside, and would have fallen had not Bridger caught him.

"Great Heaven" he cried, in a hoarse whisper. "It is too true—too true. It is Alfonse Godot—murdered."

Annette became pale as death and fell sobbing in the Scotch detective's arms.

"What pantomime is this?" demanded Videre, rising suddenly in anger. "What woes these people may have I know not, nor want to know. I demand that I be at once released from custody."

"There is evidently either a painful mistake or cleverly planned conspiracy at work here," said the attorney, addressing the coroner. "But there is no proof that either of these prisoners was ever in the company of the deceased, much less that they are in any way implicated in his death. The high indorsement of the British Minister at Washington offsets the oath of this man Goucher, whose appearance alone is sufficient to nullify his statement; and I therefore demand the prompt exoneration of these gentlemen."

"Gentlemen," said Dr. Macy, solemnly, his pale features, gray hair, and earnest utterance impressing the jurors that he spoke the truth, "I must ask you, in the name of justice, to hold these men. I understand this case fully, and even know that this man here dead is Alfonse Godot, so do I believe that one of these prisoners is his murderer, and the other a base impostor in his service."

"I have here," said the Scotch detective, "a miniature of Alfonse Godot and his wife, Alice. The portraits were taken some twenty years past, but I will ask you to look well at them, and see which of the two faces the male pictures resemble most, and if the lady's picture does not resemble the young lady in my arms."

Taking the miniatures from the Scotch detective's hand, Bridger passed them to the coroner.

He looked at them carefully, and then passed them to the jurors.

Between the male portrait and the features of the dignified invalid, there was no resemblance whatever.

The coroner and the jurors approached the ice-box that they might compare the miniature with the features of the dead.

The Scotch detective led Annette forward toward the body.

She stood a moment gazing at the peaceful face, stooped and implanted a kiss upon the dead man's forehead, and fell back sobbing in the Scotch detective's arms.

Dr. Macy, as she turned aside, drew back the canvas, disclosing the naked breast of the corpse.

There, visible to all, was the name in India ink, "Alfonse Godot."

To it the old doctor pointed with dramatic earnestness.

The effect was instantaneous.

A hasty consultation between the coroner and the jurors ensued, and the coroner said :

"Sheriff, our duty will be to consign these prisoners to your keeping."

CHAPTER XLVI.

VIDERE IN PRISON.

The railway attorney made a vigorous speech protest against a verdict inculpating the prisoners on the evidence.

He called to the coroner's mind that he had been elected to his place by the votes of a railway city, and that the railway officials believed that the dead man had met his death by falling from the train.

He demanded the adjournment of the inquest until the day following, that he might be able to present new evidence, and the coroner, somewhat cowed, adjourned the inquest until the next day at ten A. M.

The sheriff, Bridger, and Hoffman, followed by the crowd on the street, escorted the prisoners to the town jail.

Here the railway attorney held a long conference with them, then hastened to his office and began dispatching telegrams by the dozen, east and west, in the interest of his clients.

Noticing his determined action, the sheriff telegraphed the district attorney, resident in the county town some miles distant, requesting his prompt presence in Alton.

Meanwhile Goucher had disappeared, and the detective learned on inquiry that a person answering his description had taken the noon train eastward toward New York.

The Scotch detective had secured quarters for the party at the railway hotel, and had accompanied Annette, Meg, Dr. Macy, and "Silly" Billy thither.

At dusk in the evening the district attorney arrived.

The sheriff met him at the train, and escorted him to where the three detectives sat enjoying a quiet smoke after their evening meal.

"I feel assured that we have a tough case upon our hands," he said, when he had been apprised of the facts regarding the case in hand. "Under ordinary circumstances it would be perfectly clear for procedure, but it would seem, by the manner in which the railway's attorney is working, that he is urged on by support of a most influential nature. The British Minister, possibly calling the administration at Washington to his aid, has doubtless given it as his belief that the men are innocent, and requested that no expense be spared to secure their speedy release. He has, no doubt, received satisfactory answers by cable, and is striving in good faith to set free two of his countrymen falsely accused in a strange land. The power of the railroad company has been enlisted—a change of venue may be obtained, the prisoners transferred to a distant city, and released.

"I am indeed sorry," added the attorney, "that there is not a trifle more direct testimony.

"I cannot see what more direct testimony could be had, unless some one had actually seen the murder done," returned the Scotch detective.

"Yes, or that the dead man had been seen in Videre's company by any one, anywhere," said the attorney.

"Evidence that they have been seen together, and were together on the train can be produced."

"Ah—but when?"

"If time is the question," quoth the Scotch detective, "I think I can furnish you direct evidence of Videre's guilt, and that his companion in prison is an impostor in his service, to-night."

"To-night! How?"

"By his own confession."

"If you can do that, we may defy all the influence in the world."

* * * * *

An hour later the district attorney, the sheriff, coroner, and three detectives entered the town jail.

It was now eight by the clock.

The sheriff conducted the party to the office of his deputy, at the right of the entrance.

In a large room to the left, at the farther end of the stone hall-way, Videre and the invalid were confined.

Light streamed through the grated door-way into the dark corridor without.

Videre sat reading a paper near a table in the center of the room, on which a lamp burned brightly.

To all appearance he seemed calm and untroubled; so much so that his air was that of a gentleman reading the news of the day at his own fireside.

The railway attorney had assured him that as there was no direct testimony against him, in a few days, at most, he would be free.

In the stove near by a cheerful fire glowed, dispelling the damp air of the prison.

At the rear of the room were a number of beds.

Upon one of these the invalid had thrown himself without disrobing, and was evidently sleeping soundly.

A bottle stood on the floor near the bed, and he had doubtless drank deeply of its contents.

When everything had been arranged to set on foot the Scotch detective's experiment, the sheriff's deputy emerged from the office into the corridor.

On his left arm rested a tray upon which had been placed a plate of cold turkey, bread, butter, a bottle of beer, and a glass.

Envelopes, paper, an ink-stand, pens, and the Scotch detective's necromantic glass were also among the articles thereon.

Advancing to the room's grated door, the deputy inserted the key and turned the heavy lock.

"Oh, it's you, constable" remarked Videre, as the officer entered.

"Yes," returned the deputy. "I have orders to make your stay here as comfortable as possible, under the circumstances."

"Oh, thank you."

"And fearing that you might wish a lunch during the

night, I have brought you here a little snack of turkey, bread, and beer. Here, also, are the writing materials you asked for, pens, ink, paper, envelopes, paper weight, everything needed, I believe. And, now, is there anything further that I may bring you before I retire for the night?"

"Not that I think of, thank you; your kindness, let me say, shall earn you a fitting reward, ere I depart from your keeping."

"And, as to Mr. Godot, does he require anything?"

"Bless you, no! Ha, ha! that bottle of tippie was a little too much for him. You see he is as drunk as a lord. Poor fellow! he is nearly gone with consumption, and this has been a terrible ordeal to his sensitive mind. Fancy a sick gentleman, traveling for his health, imprisoned thus. Oh, let him sleep. He knows the taste of liquor, and it is a comfort to know that he has indulged freely, and is now, for the night, free from the cares that would sorely press on him were he awake to realize them."

"Well, there's nothing else, then, that you think of?"

"No, sir; many thanks. Good-night, sir."

"Good-night."

The deputy passed into the corridor as he spoke, secured the iron door, and returned to the office.

An hour passed, and the deputy reported that Videre had partaken of the lunch, and was writing.

A half-hour later he brought the information that the prisoner had taken the supposed paper-weight in his hand and was intently gazing at it.

Some while afterward he returned to say that Videre still sat bolt upright, glaring at the necromantic glass in his hand, and that the invalid was snoring heavily as if in a drunken stupor.

CHAPTER XLVII.

DEATH OF THE DIGNIFIED INVALID.

At that moment the railway's attorney entered the office of the jail.

"I have sent for you, Mr. Blair," said the district attorney, extending his hand, "so that it may not be said that anything has been done regarding the important case on hand, in darkness."

"What do you mean?"

"I desire to ask if in your honest judgment you hold the prisoners in custody guiltless?"

"I do, but that is an unwarranted question to ask their attorney."

"True, but it is understood that nothing which may transpire here to night is to be brought forth on either side on the witness-stand."

"That is understood, eh?"

"Yes."

"Give me some insight, then, as to what you are driving at?"

"Suppose you were present with direct evidence showing that the prisoner, Videre, had been in company with the dead man on the morning of his death, evidence that he had struck the fatal blow with the sand bag, what would you say then?"

"It would still be my privilege to defend him; but you can produce no such evidence."

"It is believed that we can produce even more direct evidence than that."

"What?"

"A confession of the crime."

"How?"

"By mesmeric influence."

"I protest that such evidence would be received by no court in Christendom."

"I agree with you there."

"Then why permit this outrageous attempt upon the prisoner?"

"It is done by Detective Fandon, that he may be aided in adducing proof for the State."

"A detective has no right to tamper with a prisoner in custody."

"In his efforts to fasten crime, he has a right to approach a prisoner, if given that privilege by the custodian of the prison."

"And I have given my consent," said the sheriff.

"You have then desired my attendance to witness this performance?"

"To witness the detective's effort, and since you are assured of your client's innocence, you certainly have no reason to object."

"I will not, for I have little faith that the experiment will amount to anything. So proceed."

The deputy led toward the room in which the prisoners were confined, closely followed by the Scotch detective.

The door was softly opened, the Scotch detective permitted to enter, and the door closed after him.

The party in the corridor formed in a half circle about the grated door, so that all might see and hear what passed within.

Videre still sat stolidly staring at the dark glass in his hand.

It was evident that he had succumbed fully to its mysterious influence.

Drawing a chair to the prisoner's side, the Scotch detective placed his right hand beneath and against the hand in which rested the oval ball of glass.

"Well, Pere," said he, in a low, distinct voice, "you see that your old father, 'Iron' Mike Drugo, is here with you?"

"Yes—so you are," returned the prisoner, without removing his glance from the glass.

"And what have you to say to your old dad?" continued Fandon.

"Times are tough on us, aren't they?" returned the prisoner, as before.

"The man is surely under mesmeric influence," whispered the district attorney, and those standing near, including the railway's attorney, assented.

"Not so bad, Pere," continued the Scotch detective. "You didn't think that I would leave you in a flimsy country prison, did you? Why, as soon as I heard of it I was on hand, put my old tricks to practice, and don't you see, I've got you safe here and hid in my hotel at Garson?"

"So you have."

"I think it strange you did not write me?"

"But I did."

"When?"

"Twice before I left England, and three times from New York."

"What did you say in the letters?"

"I told you that Godot had suddenly turned up from India, and had come out to the estate. I was there, lucky enough, seeing after the building of a new practice track, and stables for some fresh racing stock I had bought. I never dreamed of his turning up, and wasn't fixed to give things over to him just then."

"But you thought you would be compelled to, eh?"

"Yes, at first. But he told that he had learned he had a daughter living in America, and by seeming to take great interest in the matter, I managed to get him out of England without making legal claim to the property."

"That was good, and what was your plan for America?"

"To put him out of the way, of course."

"Well, how did you go about it?"

"I was a long time making up my mind, but I concluded to knock him from a running railway train."

"Well, how did you proceed?"

"I managed to get a sand bag from a 'crooked' man in New York, which I could readily destroy after using it."

"What was the next move?"

"I met a consumptive swindler in a restaurant one night, who might answer the description of Godot."

"What did you do with him?"

"I followed him from the place, and made a trade with him."

"In what way?"

"I was to pay him so much money down, so much weekly, and one thousand pounds in the end, if he would go on ahead to Pittsburgh, represent himself as Alfonse Godot, and carry out my instructions."

"Did he go to Pittsburgh?"

"Yes."

"What was the next move?"

"I wrote you to bring Annette to Pittsburgh, to meet her true father."

"Then the consumptive was to play father to Annette?"

"Yes."

"And what was he to do with her?"

"I intended that they should both go to Florida, and, in some such way as the overturning of a pleasure-boat, stay there."

"Well, how did the thing work?"

"I left New York with Godot on the night train."

"Where did you go?"

"To Philadelphia, and changed the direction of the journey from there to Pittsburgh."

"That was cute. What happened?"

"I tried to get him several times on the platform, to take the air, while the train rushed along, but he would not go."

"Stubborn, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, what next?"

"When the train stopped for breakfast at Alton, I asked him off to breakfast."

"Well?"

"He said he was not hungry, so I finally coaxed him off to get a hot whisky punch."

"Where did you get it?"

"About a block away from the railway hotel."

"Who served you?"

"A boy."

"What did you do then?"

"I suggested a walk up the track for a little exercise."

"He consented?"

"No, he refused, because it was drizzling rain."

"What then?"

"I told him that he had his overcoat on, and would be in danger of hemorrhage if he did not take exercise after taking the hot toddy."

"Did he go, then?"

"Yes—reluctantly."

"Well?"

"I urged him to a brisk walk, so that I might do the work, and catch the train."

"Did you meet any one on the way?"

"Only two or three shop hands with dinner buckets."

"Did they notice you?"

"No."

"Well, how did you proceed?"

"When we reached the cut I looked back, and saw no one looking."

"Well?"

"A large boulder of rock, at the cut's right side, hid the town and station from view, and I crowded him over behind it, telling him that it was better walking."

"Well?"

"So soon as he stepped aside from the track I pulled the sand-bag from my pocket, and struck him across the back of the neck."

"How did he take it?"

"He never spoke."

"It settled him, eh?"

"Yes. His head fell back on his shoulders, and his body fell forward against the side of the cut. It was a sickening sight."

"I grant you. What next?"

"I knew his neck was broken, but I struck him a dozen blows on the head to make sure."

"What then?"

"I took everything from his pockets which might identify him."

"Well?"

"I heard the engines blowing off steam, and, fearing that the train would go off without me, I hastened back."

"And caught the train?"

"Yes; it did not start for five minutes after I returned."

"Were you not afraid that the conductor would miss Godot?"

"No."

"Why?"

"I had learned that the conductors changed at Alton."

"Did they?"

"Yes, it was a new conductor."

"So you got on safely?"

"Yes, to Pittsburgh."

"What happened at Pittsburgh?"

"I met the man I had fixed it with to impersonate Godot at the depot."

"What then?"

"Soon after we were arrested by the detective."

"Did the man weaken?"

"Not at first. I gave him five hundred dollars in prison, and fresh instructions, assuring him that all would be fixed right by the British Minister."

"What then?"

"I telegraphed the Legation and gave prominent reference in London, who have reason to consider me good."

"Well—is the man still determined to stick by you?"

"He 'squealed' in the prison."

"He did, eh?"

"Yes, he had a poor nerve."

"What did he say?"

"He said he was thankful for my bounty, and was willing to serve me so long as there was no hangman's shadow in the background."

"And what did you do about it?"

"I fixed him."

"How?"

"The constable brought in a bottle of brandy."

"Well?"

"I urged him to drink."

"What—brandy?"

"Brandy and laudanum."

"Brandy and laudanum—you mixed it to suit his taste?"

"No—to suit my purpose."

"How much of it did he swallow?"

"Sufficient."

"What did you do it for?"

"To deaden his tongue."

"But did you not fear it would be found out?"

"No."

"Why?"

"The man was nearly dead with the consumption, and his troubles, and the overdose of liquor, will answer for the rest."

"Where is the laudanum vial now?"

"I broke it to pieces amid the burning coals in the stove."

At this point the party of watchers entered the room from the hall-way.

They found that the invalid had almost ceased to breathe; huge beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead, nor could they arouse him from his stupor.

Bridger looked into the stove to see if he might find bits of glass in evidence of the laudanum vial, but without avail.

The form of the dying man was borne from the room and placed upon a sofa in the office.

A physician was sent for, and the deputy hastened to procure a bowl of strong coffee.

Meanwhile the Scotch detective continued his mesmeric examination.

"Well, Pere," he said, "we've only got to look after the girl now?"

"Yes; she must be got out of the way."

"Has there been any sign of suspicion since regarding old Godot's death?"

"None."

"You remember the day of the murder?"

"Talk of something else. If you conjure up the sight of that old man with his gashed throat I will dream of it for a fortnight."

"You know how I killed him?"

"Certainly. You cut his throat with the razor."

"But you urged me to it."

"Yes; it was necessary."

"You forged the paper that was accepted as his will, did you not?"

"Certainly. But why do you ask such foolish questions?"

Being anxious to learn the fate of the invalid, the Scotch detective here ended his mesmeric experiment.

Removing the glass from the prisoner's hand he placed it in his pocket, arose to his feet, and drew back his chair.

As he did so Videre, with a start, awoke.

For an instant his eyes glared wildly upon Fandon, then springing to his feet, he began to pace to and fro in the room excitedly.

"I came to see if you required anything," said the Scotch detective.

Videre made no answer, but continued his walk.

The Scotch detective passed from the room to the hallway, and Bridger who had waited without, locked the door.

Meanwhile, the deputy had procured the coffee and endeavored to make the insensible invalid swallow some of the liquid; but the man's breathing had grown slower and fainter, and when the Scotch detective and Bridger entered the office he was a corpse.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

DEATH OF VIDERE.

The railway's attorney approached the door of the room in which Videre was confined, and endeavored to converse with him.

The prisoner continued to walk to and fro in an excited manner, and answered the attorney's questions in monosyllables, as if he did not wish to talk to any one.

It was now getting well on toward midnight, and the party left the prison in a body.

The case was a rare one, already involving three murders, and afforded abundant topic for conversation.

Even the railway's attorney was now convinced that Videre was a double murderer.

He was non-committal, however, and, like a true lawyer, busied his wits to find some loop on which to hang an excuse for his client's crime.

At length he shadowed forth the plea he proposed to advance.

"This man, Videre," said he, as the party neared the hotel, and were about parting for the night, "is, without a doubt, out of his head—insane."

The sheriff pooh-poohed the idea.

"Did you not notice the wild look of the man as he paced to and fro in his room?" exclaimed the attorney. "He would not converse even with me, his attorney. Remember, I do not say that he was out of his mind prior to Detective Fandon's experiment; but, I do aver, that he is as mad as a March hare now."

"The necromantic glass had no warrant to drive him

crazy," returned Bridger. "I have tried it, and the effect is to make one weak and dazed for a few minutes, but that soon wears off."

"By the way," demanded the Scotch detective, "has Videre been searched—might he have any weapons upon his person?"

"He might have," responded the sheriff, "for we do not search prisoners here when merely held for examination."

"You should search all prisoners," said the Scotch detective, "and I would suggest that we make all haste back, and make the search in this case."

"It is very late, and, doubtless, the deputy has retired," objected the sheriff.

"You must, then, assume the responsibility, if you sustain your objection," quoth the Scotch detective. "I call all here to witness that I have made the suggestion."

"Why, if you fear that any new trouble might result from letting the matter lie over until morning, we will return and search the prisoner," returned the sheriff.

"I can only say," said the Scotch detective, "that I would rest far easier abed this night did I know that Videre had no weapons on his person. The man is necessarily in an excited state of mind, and it is only proper that all care should be taken in the matter."

"You do not intimate, do you," queried the district attorney, "that there is danger of the prisoner killing himself?"

"My past experience causes me to fear that," returned the Scotch detective, "and, I may add, that I am even now, possessed of a feeling of dread that the man may have done so already."

"You alarm me!" exclaimed the sheriff.

"It would not surprise me to find it so," said the Scotch detective. "Videre's father, when brought to corner under like circumstances, cut his throat, and I take great blame to myself that I did not take thought to search the prisoner. It would be a terrible shock upon me to find that a repetition of Bolard's death had occurred in this case, and I, therefore, beg of you all to, without delay, accompany me back to the prison."

The Scotch detective's manner was so earnest that without further question the party in a body turned with him back toward the jail.

At every step Fandon's anxiety seemed to become more intense.

He reached the prison fully a hundred yards in advance

of the rest, and, bounding up the stone steps, rapped loudly on the door.

The building was dark, and it was evident that the deputy had retired to his cot in his office.

The stirring events of the night had not permitted him to sleep too soundly, however, and as the main party arrived at the jail's steps, the door of the prison opened.

The deputy appeared in the door-way bare-headed, in his night-clothes, and glared upon his midnight visitors in astonishment.

"Did you search that prisoner?" demanded the Scotch detective, excitedly.

"No, sir," returned the deputy.

"Then get your keys—we must search him at once."

The deputy vanished to procure his keys, and the Scotch detective darted within the corridor.

Half way toward the room, at the rear, he suddenly paused.

"Gentlemen," he said, turning about, "I feel—yes, I know, that we have come too late. I smell the odor of death. Pere Videre is dead!"

"Nonsense!" sneered Bridger. "I'll wager you he's as lively as a cricket."

As he spoke Bridger hastened toward the grated door of the room where Videre had been confined.

Light streamed forth through the bars into the hall-way, and it was evident that the prisoner's lamp was still burning.

On the instant that Bridger reached the door, and peered within the room, he started back with a gesture of horror.

But the Scotch detective, on reaching his side, rested his hands upon the iron bars and gazed calmly upon the scene within.

Shaking his head solemnly, he said:

"I knew it! I knew it!"

Pere Videre's dead body lay in a pool of blood to the right of the table within.

In his hand was clutched a bloody pocket-knife, and a deep gash in his throat told the method of his suicide.

A moment later the deputy flung open the door.

The body was still warm, but life was extinct.

"I trust," said the Scotch detective, with evident emotion, "that no blame will attach to me for this terrible business."

"None whatever, my dear boy," quoth the sheriff.

"For my part," said the railway's attorney, "I will hold

you all, gentlemen, to the condition upon which I assented to view Detective Fandon's mesmeric experiment upon the prisoner. That the evidence adduced would be received by no court was admitted. The world will know that these two prisoners were accused of murder, imprisoned here, and that one died by laudanum and the other by a knife in his own hand, and thus let the matter go forth and remain."

To this proposition all assented, and the undertaker's conveyance was for the second time sent for.

"It is terrible, Bobe, terrible!" said the Scotch detective, suddenly turning toward Bridger. "I fancy I feel much as you did when in the discharge of your duties as conductor you caused the death of those two passengers. I have done with mesmeric experiments forever, and as for the necromantic glass—there!"

As he spoke Fandon took the black ball of glass from his pocket, and dashed it into a thousand fragments upon the stone floor of the prison.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE BIG DIAMOND.

On the following morning the work of framing a legal statement of the entire case began in the office of the railway's attorney.

Four copies were made of this statement, and the procedure occupied two days.

Copies of the documents were forwarded respectively to the British Minister at Washington, to the Scotland Yard, London, to the clerk of the county in which Garson was situated, and the fourth copy given to the Scotch detective, and the original document retained by the district attorney.

The bodies of Alfonse Godot and Pere Videre were embalmed and forwarded, in iron caskets, directly to police headquarters in London.

Detective Hoffman was presented one thousand dollars by Dr. Macy for the efficient service he had rendered, and departed to resume his duties at Pittsburgh.

The personal effects of the dead were delivered to Annette, who was declared their legal owner.

Though at times sad in the realization of her father's fate, Annette seemed to grow more beautiful every hour

under the sunshine and hope that help sway her glad heart.

Meg, in whose hands a document had been placed releasing to her all claim to the estate of her late husband, carried her head erect, ever mindful that she was soon to assume the role of landlady in Bolard's hotel.

She occupied her time studying a fashion-book, and determining on the purchase of sundry articles of finery by whose assistance she proposed to squash sundry females of Garson, whose indulgent husbands had permitted them to outdress her during the reign of the late lamented landlord.

"Silly" Billy walked the streets of Alton expending the change which Dr. Macy freely furnished him.

He visited every bar room and candy store in the town.

The bartenders called him "Coal Oil Johnny."

He also became a great favorite with nurse-maids, wheeling about their charges, for he never passed a baby without placing a piece of candy in its chubby fists.

Dr. Macy declared that he felt twenty years younger than he had done twenty years before in London, showing a clear gain of forty years in his heart's feelings, which, by the way, is the true gauge of any one's age.

The day previous to the departure from Alton, Meg purchased a huge, green ostrich feather which she added to the decorations of her rakish brigand hat.

That night Annette playfully reminded her that perhaps the good people of Garson might expect to see color, somewhat more somber than green, upon a lone widow's hat.

But Meg responded, with a toss of the head:

"Thru for you, Annette, if it be thru they are to behold a lone widow. But, in faith, if they do or no is at present a dape mystery."

"Why, Mam Meg, is it possible you think of marrying again?"

"And why not? Sure I'm as young and full of giddiness as ever I was."

Whereat Annette burst forth in such a merry peal of laughter that the musical sound thereof, reaching the hotel's office, caused the clerk's half dozen canaries that had placed their heads beneath their wings for the night, to brighten up, and trill forth in responsive song.

At the time Dr. Macy, the Scotch detective, and Bridger sat quietly conversing in the office.

Fandon turned his handsome face toward the stair-way,

listening, and his black eyes flashed with undisguised delight.

Tears of joy welled from Dr. Macy's eyes.

"Dear little light-hearted!" he exclaimed. "How happy she is? In her dreams pure as gold, gentle as fairy-land, the future is one never ending landscape of sunshine and flowers."

"Heaven grant all her dreams then," muttered the Scotch detective.

"And I echo your prayer, Fandon," said Dr. Macy. "She is a little angel, and you must make her a husband of husbands."

"Then you do not object to the match?"

"No, no, my brave boy, she is yours."

"Then, indeed, I have met a rich reward for such service as I have done," returned the Scotch detective, clasping the old man's hand.

"For your part, Bridger," continued Dr. Macy, "I have not forgotten my offer of ten thousand dollars for Annette's recovery, or that Fandon has waived all claim in your favor. I will give you a draft for the amount when we arrive in New York, and here I desire to present you a keepsake that I trust may continue to remind you of the happiness you have aided to bring to a heart-broken old man."

Dr. Macy took from his pocket and placed in Bridger's hand a tiny paper box.

"I have one just like it for you in England," he added, addressing Fandon.

Then bidding the two detectives good-night, the old man retired to his room.

Bridger opened the box, and found that it contained a pure, white, ten-carat diamond, which sparkled grandly in the gas-light.

That day the detectives had received several letters which had been forwarded by Bridger's order from New York.

One of these had been addressed to the Scotch detective, and taking it from his pocket, after complimenting Bridger upon the receipt of the magnificent brilliant, he said:

"Here is something which will amuse Annette. What think you, Bobe—the fair and fiery little Corydon widow, that lovely, red-headed smuggler of choice Havanas, is to be married one week from to-night?"

"And who's to be the lucky man?"

"Tom Bowling, the hotel clerk, of course. I and Annette are invited, and you, Bobe, and the doctor, must accompany us."

"Thank you kindly, but somehow weddings don't seem to run much in my line."

"But on this occasion I might need the assistance of a best man."

"Ah, if you have thoughts of making the thing a double event I am at your command."

"Well, Bobe, that's about the size of my present intentions," quoth the Scotch detective, nestling back in his chair, and blowing the fragrant smoke of his cigar in circles above his head.

"You see," he continued, "every decent fellow ought, at some time, to become a family man, whatever be his trade. I don't suppose that anything more attractive in the line of pins and petticoats is going to come my way—and I wouldn't label it Mrs. Fandon if it would. But although I am, as I may say, an old 'rounder,' and well aware that my love is reciprocated, I find that proposing the exact moment when the knot is to be tied is a confounded ticklish matter. Wherefore I am very glad that Tom Bowling and the widow have extended us an invitation to their wedding, for somehow it seems that a woman doesn't like to see another get the better of her in things matrimonial, and it will only be natural that Annette, when she hears of the widow's wedding, will want to show her that she, too, holds a winning hand. And, therefore, from the present state of my heart, I conclude that she will most likely become Mrs. Fandon at the same time and place that Mrs. Bibby becomes Mrs. Tom Bowling."

This was not the hundredth part of what the Scotch detective said at the time on the subject.

He continued to talk on and blow the smoke in wreaths above his head.

His eyes were fixed dreamily the while on the curling vapor.

In every wreath of it he saw framed a picture of his fair *fiancee*, and when the wreaths broke apart the blue smoke seemed, in his fancy, to swirl itself about and form the name "Annette."

Bridger did not fully appreciate these musings of the gallant man from Scotland Yard.

In fact he lay back upon his chair and dropped into a doze.

At midnight Fandon ran out of words expressive of the

tender flame that possessed his breast, and observing Bridger's condition, awoke him, and the two went to bed.

CHAPTER L.

THE BURGLARY PLANNED.

At ten P.M. on the evening of the day of Goucher's disappearance from Alton that gentleman arrived in New York.

Going at once to his den on Delancy street he was made the recipient of a right royal thieves' welcome.

A motley throng of "crooked" people, some ragged and dirty, others attired fashionably, pressed about and grasped his hand, as if he were a newly elected alderman.

Their congratulations were noisy, and garnished with slang.

Goucher testified his appreciation by frequently ordering drinks for the house.

His liberality was responded to in like manner by every one present whose financial condition permitted him to so distinguish himself.

The bar did a thriving trade, and as fresh gangs of "crooks" dropped in the place at length became so crowded that Ted, the bartender, facetiously remarked that if the jubilee continued to boom it would become necessary to remove the paper from the wall to make room.

Nevertheless the drinking went on, songs were sung, and dancing indulged in, until far beyond midnight.

At length the more orderly persons present began to depart in twos and threes, and at three in the morning only those remained who had fully succumbed to the seductive influence of the flowing bowl.

Of these there were two-score men and women.

They had bestowed themselves in every conceivable shape on chairs, tables, and the floor.

"They are all as peaceful as the denizens of the morgue," quoth Goucher, on conceiving the completeness of whisky's victory. "So turn down the 'glims,' Ted, my boy, and we'll go up stairs, the four of us—for I have something of interest for the interior portion of your private ears."

The king of the "ken" as he spoke stood flanked by his trusty "pals," "Tom, the Frog," and "Jack, the Fork," and Ted, the burly barman, at the word, set about lowering the lights.

"Tom, the Frog," carried his right arm in a sling, and his face was adorned with several patches of court-plaster, in evidence of his fall through the trap.

When the doors had been secured, and the lights turned low, the party ascended to the "sawdust" den above, and lighting a candle, took seats about the table.

"I've explained to you," began Goucher, "all the events of my trip to the country save an inkling which I twigged, pointing toward business—in fact toward a job which bids fair to pay good. The safest job, in truth it is, that ever was aimed against a 'boodle' burdened safe."

"A job, eh?" said Ted, the bartender, edging eagerly toward Goucher.

"You're just like any other 'freshman' that has aspirations to try his hand as a 'cracksman,' " continued "Tom, the Frog." "But when you've been as far into the mill as I've been, you won't jump so quick at what at best is bloody, tough work."

"No growlin' now, Tom, boy," quoth Goucher. "It wasn't me that put you in the hole."

"No—but I laid a day stiff from the business, and am pretty well broke up yet just the same."

"The more reason your heart should be cheered by a prospect of good 'swag.' But seeing that you're hurt, we must take Ted along to do your work, and Dutch Hen can look after the bar."

"Well, out with it—what is it?" growled "Tom, the Frog," squirming from a sudden twitch of pain in his broken arm.

"Muggins has got a safe in the room back of the old-clothes store, that's just bustin' ripe with 'boodle'—bonds, greenbacks, watches, diamonds, and the whole of it's been got so 'crooked' that he dare not 'squeal' if he lost it. The 'confoundland' dog's dead, and I've got the signal that's open-sesame on his door."

"The dog's dead, eh?" asked "Tom, the Frog," his eyes now flashing eagerly, and his aching member forgotten.

"Yes, the dog is dead."

"How do you know?"

"I know, and there's no particular use of recounting here a serial story about it. The dog's dead, and I know it, or I wouldn't say so."

"Good. What's the signal?"

"A tap on Rachel's window."

"Who opens the door?"

"She does."

"But she's a healthy woman, and has lungs."

"And we're healthy men, and have hands."

"I see—muzzle her, fasten her down and the rest's easy."

"Just so."

"Well, when's it to be?"

"Before they get another dog—to-morrow night, early."

"Why early?" asked Ted, the bartender.

CHAPTER LI.

THE BURGLARS SET FORTH.

"Because the whole business is as plain sailin' as pickin' up money from the gutter, and so's the virtuous feelin's of the 'peelers' won't be ruffled at seein' a gentleman carryin' a small bundle through the streets."

"So it's to be without back-water, and dead to rights, to-morrow night?"

"Yes, that's what I said. And now, how do your pulses beat on it? Is it a go?"

And Goucher doubled his fist as if to strike the table.

"Go it is!" exclaimed all in a chorus, striking the table with their fists as they spoke, as to emphasize the bargain.

Soon after Ted, the bartender, descended to the bar-room, and flung himself upon a mattress which he spread behind the bar, while the others entered the apartment adjoining the "sawdust" den, and sought repose.

At nine on the subsequent night Ted, the bartender, emerged from the side door of the Delancy street den and strode off toward the Bowery.

Several minutes later "Jack, the Fork," came forth, and after glancing cautiously up and down the street, started on a brisk walk in the opposite direction.

"Tom, the Frog," soon after made his appearance and, after surveying the surroundings as "Jack, the Fork," had done, walked carelessly toward the Bowery.

Five minutes elapsed, and then Goucher stepped forth upon the door-step, smoking a cigar.

He stood here for a time, peering in all directions, and keeping his eyes on all passers.

He, of the four men, had alone made an attempt at disguise.

Being a large, portly man, he feared that his shape might

betray him, and knowing that he could not reduce himself in size, he had so padded himself with the tools to be used, and otherwise, that his overcoat barely buttoned about the huge mass.

He had also darkened his gray beard, hair, and eyebrows with a black cosmetic.

A broad slouch hat covered his head, and at a casual glance any one would have set him down as a German lager vender, swelled to bursting by a too liberal patronage of his own goods.

At length he waddled off slowly, as a very fat man might, shaping his way to the eastward, as "Jack, the Fork," had done.

At ten o'clock the four men met in the dark shadow of a church, near where East Broadway intersects Market street.

A policeman, whose beat lay through East Broadway, had barely passed toward Chatham square, and the burglars had paused to give him time to go his way and get well out of theirs.

The night was raw and black, and a drizzling rain was falling.

Few people were upon the streets, and East Broadway was dark and deserted.

Fortune in this regard had favored the dark scheme on hand, and, as Goucher expressed it, the "job" bade fair to be a "walk over."

"Suppose," said "Jack, the Fork," "that after all's done the risk will have been run, and no 'swag' visible?"

"Jack, the Fork's" line of business, as we have seen, had been investigating the contents of careless people's pockets.

He had never "given a hand" in a burglary before, and he evidently felt ill at ease in attempting the role of a burglar.

Goucher was quick to perceive this, and he felt it to be his duty to give Jack some encouragement.

"Bah!" he ejaculated. "I know the 'boodle's there, and I know the racket's safe. If I didn't know it was safe, and didn't know the 'swag' was there, and that they'd be no after-claps, do you think I'd be here? Not much! Nobody has less love for lookin' through iron bars than myself, and all of you know that."

"Who told you the 'boodle' was there?" "Jack, the Fork," ventured to ask.

"Who told me, eh?"

"Yes."

"One as knows."

"One of the 'trippers' that took you off on the rail?"

"No. Do you think I'd take such information from a 'fly cop?' Not much! But I see your knees is gittin' a little weak, Jack, and so I'll illustrate the business by tellin' you a little story. You all know Dutch Hen, that's tendin' bar to-night for Ted?"

"Of course."

"Well, five years ago, Dutch Hen married a girl—do you know that?"

"Certainly."

"Well, she was awful jealous of Hen. But she had no reason, for he loved the very cobble-stones she set her number twelves on. However, she was jealous, and a woman's a woman at all times and forever as near as I can find out. Well, all run on so-so, till Hen was married a trifle over four years. Somehow or other they had then a pretty, rosy bit of a servant-maid lookin' after the three-year old baby, and it seems that one day when his wife was out Hen came in, and, after huggin' and kissin' the baby, wound up by kissin' Sarah, the maid. He didn't mean no harm though, for he loved and respected his wife, even if he was a bartender. However, after a while, when the wife came in and took the little prattling boy onto her lap, what does the little cuss do, but, lookin' first cunningly at Sarah and then at Hen, says he:

"'Dot somefin' for to tell oo, mamma.'

"Now, mind you, if the little rascal had done or said no more the thing was already out of the bag, for both Sarah's and Hen's faces were as red as fire, and the wife's eyes were just a-shootin' out daggers at the two of them. Hen grabbed up the basket the wife had brought in, and jerked out of it a couple of oranges and a package of candy that were lyin' on top of the groceries. But it was no go. For as he tried to divert the little villain's mind by crammin' the stuff into his hands, that only convinced the wife all the more that Hen was a guilty man.

"'What has oo dot to tell mamma?' asked the wife.

"The little scoundrel's eyes glistened, and he pulled his mamma's head close to his lips, and eyed the trembling victims near in glory. In vain did Hen pull out his knife and make all sorts of hideous faces behind his wife's back at him.

"'Papa tised Sarah!' said the little imp, and then he roared in baby laughter.

"That settled the whole business. All that Hen could do, and say, wouldn't convince that woman different. She knew it was so. Sarah was bounced in just two seconds. Hen had to fly for his life in two more. But I believe they've got together again. And the moral of this tale is, Jack, that just as the woman knowed Sarah had been kissed by Hen, just so I know there's big 'boodle' in Muggins' safe."

"Did a baby tell you?"

"No, but the next thing to a baby did."

"What?"

"An idiot that didn't know much more than a baby."

This seemed to reassure "Jack, the Fork," and, as the "peeler" had had ample time to reach Chatham square, the burglars set forth, at a brisk walk, down East Broadway.

As they approached the Muggins house they walked slower.

Directly in front of it they paused.

"The coast's clear," commanded Goucher. "Up to the door, Ted and Jack, you know what you're to do."

Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," pulled the black masks that were ready in their hats, over their faces, and hastening up the steps, stood near the door ready for action.

Goucher followed them to the top of the steps, and, reaching forth, tapped lightly on the window with his cane; then stepped aside.

A moment later the key was cautiously turned in the lock, the bolt slid softly back, and the door opened, just a crack.

Rachel's caution, however, abetted her little, for, ere she had beheld who her visitors were, or had opportunity to close the door, it was pushed violently open, and she was roughly seized, gagged, and blindfolded.

Goucher and "Tom, the Frog," now hastily followed into the hall-way, closed, and locked the door behind them.

Rachel's struggling form was borne within her room, and again, by rougher hands than before, was she tied upon her back in bed.

Goucher now lit the wick in the large dark lantern he carried, and the four masked men passed stealthily forth into the hall-way.

Ted, the bartender and "Jack, the Fork," walked softly ahead, "Tom, the Frog," and Goucher following, the latter showing the way with the dark lantern.

At the stair-way leading beneath the burglars paused, listening.

All was quiet, and they cautiously stole down until they stood at the door of the room in which was the safe.

Green burglars, like landsmen on a whaling voyage, are the most venturesome, and Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," again took the place of honor in advance at the door.

Goucher and "Tom, the Frog," remained aside upon the stair-way, and when Goucher perceived that the men were in right position, he shut the slide over the lantern's eye, and all was dark.

A ray of light streamed from the keyhole of the door, and it seemed probable that Moses or Sammy Muggins, or both of them, were within.

Placing his ear to the keyhole, Ted, the bartender, heard the heavy breathing of a man in sound slumber.

On learning this Goucher commanded a quiet wait.

Half an hour passed, and nothing had occurred.

Suddenly the voice of Moses Muggins within was heard to say, in a subdued tone :

"Sammy, ho ! Sammy ; vas you asleep ? Do you hear me ? Vas you asleep and sound, I say ?"

It seemed that Moses had become satisfied that Sammy was in that condition, for, a moment later, the patter of his slippers was heard as he crossed the carpetless floor from his writing-desk toward the safe.

The miser was going to feast his eyes upon his hoard, and assure himself that he was rich once again before retiring for the night.

The click of the combination came plainly to the burglars without, as he turned the safe's knob, and then the heavy door of the Jew's treasure-house was heard to swing open.

A moment later Goucher reached forward, and tapped lightly on the door.

Instantly the safe door was swung to, and locked.

Then the patter of the Jew's slippers sounded as he again hastily crossed the floor.

On the instant the ray at the keyhole vanished, and it was evident that the cautious miser had turned out his lamp.

CHAPTER LII.

THE BURGLARY CONTINUED.

For a time all was black as midnight and quiet as the grave.

Then Goucher leaned forward and again tapped lightly upon the door.

"Who vas dere?" whispered Muggins through the key-hole.

"Rachel," returned "Jack, the Fork," in imitation of Rachel's voice.

"Vat you vant?"

"A man has brought you someting."

"Vat man?"

"A strange man."

"Did you let de man in de house?"

"No. Vy should you ask such foolish ting?"

"Vat he brought?"

"A quite heavy package."

"Vere is it?"

"Here, I got it."

"Vell, take it vid you to your room."

"I vould not have such rich ting vid me. I was afraid."

"Vat is it?"

"Diamonds and vatches."

"Vat did de man say?"

"He vould see you to-morrow by de store."

"Did you, sure, lock de door?"

"Sure."

"And nobody vas near you on de stair-vay?"

"Vat makes you so foolish? Open de door, or I go right away and throw de man's package on de street. I like not such business, and have a fool made of it."

"Vait a minute."

Softly Muggins turned the key in the lock, slipped back the bolt, opened the door several inches, passed his hand through the crack, and said, harshly:

"Quick! Rachel, give me de package!"

The bartender's left hand clutched the extended arm on the instant in a grip of iron, while his right shot swiftly through the aperture and clutched Muggins' throat.

"Great Heaven, Sammy! Robbers! Tiefs!" cried the

terrified man ere the burglar's clutch had shut off his wind.

The next instant Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," had pushed their way into the room and gagged the trembling "fence."

A pause of a moment ensued, but as Sammy Muggins' heavy breathing showed that he still soundly slumbered, Goucher opened the eye of his dark lantern and threw it within the room.

At a signal from Goucher, Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," hurried the terrified Jew toward the huge iron safe.

Placing him upon his knees before it, they pressed the muzzles of their revolvers against his temples, while Ted, the bartender, in an assumed voice, bade him open the safe, or he would blow out his brains.

Muggins made an effort as if to grasp the knob of the safe's door, then, either fainting or feigning to do so, fell to one side limp and insensible.

The burglars then searched his pockets.

In a vest-pocket they found the key used in the combination.

"Tom, the Frog," and Goucher examined it closely.

Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," lifted Muggins' form, and, placing it upon the vacant bed near by, stood watch for the insensible man's revival.

Fearing that his breath was stopped by the gag, they loosed it, and finally removed it entirely.

Goucher placed the dark lantern on the floor with its glare turned upon the door of the safe.

"Tom, the Frog," knelt beside Goucher, and the two strove patiently for a full half hour to work the combination.

The men were all deeply interested in the work, and their eyes eagerly watched the efforts upon the safe's lock.

Suddenly sounded a voice in the room :

"Would you do such ting to poor old Moses vat vas so long your good friend, Mr. Goucher?"

The burglars started in surprise.

A pistol shot would not have startled their nerves more.

"Tom, the Frog," and Goucher bounded to their feet.

Goucher caught at the dark lantern, and threw its light whence the voice came.

Moses Muggins, pale, and trembling in terror, sat upright in the bed, glaring toward him.

Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," were so astonished that they had not moved to replace the gag.

Goucher flew into a passion.

Giving vent to a volley of curses, he called the watchers at the bedside "wooden men," and bade them "throttle" the "bloke," and tie him down tight.

"But I would speak vid you, Mr. Goucher. You shall have an arrangement, a good arrangement!" cried Muggins, endeavoring to spring from the bed.

"You don't know who you're talkin' to. We're officers," said Goucher.

Muggins could make no reply, for, stung to the quick by Goucher's curses, Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," had seized him like two tigers pouncing upon their prey.

Venting their fury upon the helpless cause of Goucher's wrath, they tied the gag in the unfortunate Jew's mouth so tightly that it was a wonder it did not break the man's jaw.

The band about their victim's eyes and head they tightened with all their strength, and while he moaned in torture they lashed his limbs with a vigor that almost broke his old bones.

"Lively now, boys," said Goucher, when they had ended their fiendish work. "Tom can't work the combination, and if we fool much longer with it it will be daylight when we get done. We must burst her!"

As he spoke he unbuttoned his overcoat, and produced a brace, a pair of "jimmies," a handful of brace points, a can of powder, an exhaust pump, and other implements of the trade.

Placing these upon the floor near the safe, he turned in fury toward the bed on which Moses Muggins lay moaning piteously.

"Is there no way of gaggin' that bloke's nose?" he cried. "Stand by Tom now, the two of you."

This command was addressed to Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," and they obediently approached the safe, and awaited "Tom, the Frog's" orders.

He carefully selected a brace point suitable for the purpose, and adjusting it in the brace, gave the tool's handle into the bartender's hand, and, guiding the steel bit against the crevice about the safe's door, bade him bore away.

Ted, the bartender, worked with a will, and "Tom, the Frog," and "Jack, the Fork," eagerly watched the operation.

Goucher had, meanwhile, approached the bed on which Moses Muggins lay moaning in torture.

The piteous groans that issued from the sufferer's nostrils excited no sympathy in Goucher's breast.

Every moan but added to his fury.

Muggins had recognized him by his size.

If the Jew lived he was in his power.

Rather than wear a convict's stripes again he would hang.

So thought Goucher as the moans of the tortured man roused him to desperation.

Like the reformed drunkard who risks taking one drink and finds himself again rolling in the gutter, Goucher found that the light "job" he had anticipated had engulfed him again in the most desperate straits of the burglar's craft.

The burglar's rule, that "boodle without safety is rot," again became the law of his brain.

He had no choice—he must be safe.

Grasping a surplus end of the supple rope which hung from a knob at the wrists of the moaning victim, he passed it swiftly about Muggins' neck, and, forming a noose, drew it tight with all his strength, and the sufferer ceased to moan.

When Goucher had so secured the noose on Muggins' neck that it could not slip, he glanced hastily toward the men at work on the safe to see if they had noticed his action.

"Tom, the Frog," directed the dark lantern's light upon the safe's door, while Ted, the bartender, strained might and main to make the cut through its chilled iron wall.

The eyes of the three burglars flashed through the black masks in the lantern's rays, as they eagerly watched the progress of the bore, presenting a weird sight.

They had evidently not noticed the sudden cessation of Moses Muggins' moans, nor the means Goucher had used to end them.

Casting a look upon the quivering frame of the strangling man, in the shadow, upon the bed, Goucher softly approached the workers, and stood at the rear of "Tom, the Frog."

He glanced from time to time from his watch of the work toward the bed on which Sammy Muggins still soundly slept.

Suddenly the steel bit "spurred" without opposition a

full inch under Ted, the bartender's pressure, and "Tom, the Frog," declared the bore made.

Speedily adjusting a fresh bit, he gave the handle of the brace into Jack, the Fork's," hands, and directed him to make a second cut in the door's lower left corner.

For five minutes "Jack, the Fork," worked industriously at making the cut.

Then he gave up, completely fagged out.

Used, as Ted, the bartender, had been, to heavy manual labor, he was too tired to take hold, and Goucher was forced to lend a hand to complete the bore.

An hour's labor, and the second cut was made.

A moment's breathing spell ensued, and then "Tom, the Frog," inserted a steel tool, called a "feeder," into the upper hole.

The "feeder" was, in shape, something like a clay pipe. Like a pipe, also, it possessed a cavity which ran from its bowl through the stem.

The burglar then inserted a steel tube into the lower hole, and this he connected by other tubes, which screwed together in straight pieces, and elbows, like a gas-pipe, with the exhaust pump on the floor.

The crevices about the door, and the inserted tubes, were then puttied shut, so as to entirely exclude the passage of air.

"Tom, the Frog," then kept the bowl of the "feeder" poured full of powder, while Ted, the bartender, worked the exhaust pump on the floor.

As the air within was exhausted from beneath the powder was sucked in from the "feeder."

When "Tom, the Frog's" practiced eye told him that a sufficient quantity had thus been forced within the safe, the tubes were withdrawn, and the upper hole puttied shut.

Bundles of old clothing were then brought from the rear of the room and piled in front of the safe door and about the safe to deaden the sound of the explosion.

Goucher then saturated a handkerchief with chloroform, and held it to Sammy Muggins' nose.

A fuse was then inserted in the lower hole of the safe's door, and lit.

The burglars retired hastily to the stair-way without.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE BURGLARY CONCLUDED.

A moment later there was a dull, heavy explosion, which shook the house.

The burglars hastily re-entered the room.

It was filled with smoke, and the odor of burned powder.

The dark lantern's rays were first directed toward Sammy Muggins on the bed, and next upon the safe.

Sammy Muggins started like one in a nightmare when the explosion took place.

His eyes half opened, and his heavy breathing ceased.

He rolled over on his side, averting his face from toward the safe.

Gradually the heavy breathing, indicating deep slumber, returned, and it became evident that Sammy had not been awakened.

The powder had done its work well.

The lower hinge and the locks of the safe had been burst asunder, and the massive door hung by its twisted upper hinge, with its one corner resting upon the old clothing on the floor.

It was the work of a moment to lift aside the broken door.

A thin, badly warped plate door which intervened was speedily removed, and a rich prize greeted the burglars' eyes, and made them glisten through the black masks on their faces.

They beheld a tier of broad open drawers filled to overflowing with watches, gold coins, jewelry, diamonds, and gems.

Some articles were inclosed in paper, others in leather cases, and the confused mass, sparkling under the lantern's rays, bade fair to prove a rich haul.

The closed drawers of the safe were found to contain half a bushel of tightly packed bonds and bills, many being of large denomination.

"What d'ye say now, Jack Weak-knees?" demanded Goucher, with a wink and chuckle, as he proceeded to set forth the drawers upon the floor.

"Do you see any visible 'swag?'" he continued. "As

I've got an eye in my head, a shoe on my foot, and a mask on my face, there's here between two and three hundred thousand worth. And, what's more, I can't think these bonds are registered. The miserly old 'bloke' of a 'fence' didn't dare risk doin' it. So it's clear 'swag' the whole of it. According to bargain, the half's mine, and the rest's divided. Out with your bags and needles, boys, and sew that hard stuff into three flat pads, so's you can carry them inside your overcoats, and lose nothing. I'll stow away the bills and bonds myself.

"Work spry now," added the king of the "gang," "and when the 'boodle's' hid safe away in the old den we'll take a stiff horn of sour-mash to the comin' of merry Christmas and happy New Year, whether Jonathan Greenhorn sells his farm in Kentucky, and comes on to buy 'sawdust' or not."

The watches, coins, and jewelry were speedily sewed in ridges in the folds of the gummy sacks which the three burglars carried, while Goucher succeeded in stowing away the bonds and money in various lodgments about his person.

The three "pads" when finished were two feet long, a foot wide, four inches in thickness, and quite heavy.

It was necessary that they should be securely tied to the men before they donned their overcoats, and buttoned them about them.

Several lengths of supple cord rope were needed, and Goucher turned toward the bed on which Moses Muggins had been bound.

Placing his hand upon the victim's face, he felt that it was cold, and he knew that Muggins was dead.

With a swift movement he unloosened the noose from the dead man's neck, and cast the rope aside as before.

"Fetch that 'glim' here," he exclaimed in feigned astonishment. "I'm a fearin' the old 'bloke' has 'croaked.' "

"Dead!" echoed the three burglars, in a chorus, and they advanced excitedly toward the bed.

Goucher threw the lantern's rays on the dead man's face.

Ted, the bartender, hastened to loose the band from the eyes of the corpse, and the gag from the mouth.

"He's as stiff as a frozen eel!" he said, as his hand touched the cold features of the murdered man.

When the band and gag had been removed the sight caused the four burglars to start back with a shudder.

Goucher appeared more horrified than the others.

His plan was to leave the blame of Muggins' death rest evenly upon all.

As it was, Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," seemed directly instrumental in its cause.

"You bound him too tightly, boys," said Goucher, shaking his head.

"It's bad—bad!" muttered Ted, the bartender.

"Awful!" ejaculated "Jack, the Fork," trembling in terror.

"Well, it can't be helped," said Goucher. "And as we need the rope that's about him, set to and take it off. And then if we can find a bit of rope in the house, we'll trice him up by the neck, so's nobody can swear but that he committed suicide on finding he had been robbed."

"Here it is," quoth "Tom, the Frog," tossing a clothes-line, which he had found near the bed on which Sammy Muggins still soundly slept, upon the corpse.

Goucher seized the rope and forming a noose slipped it about the dead man's neck ere the three men had perceived the impress of the cord which he had placed there.

Ted, the bartender, speedily removed the supple hempen cord from the dead man's limbs, and cutting it into suitable lengths the three men had soon tied upon their breasts the "pads" containing the heavy portion of the "boodle."

When they had buttoned their overcoats about them no one would have noticed that they carried such a bulk of matter upon their persons.

Goucher now glanced about the room, and his eyes rested upon the transom over the door leading to the stair-way.

Placing a chair in the door-way and standing thereon, he pushed open the transom glass, and bade Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," carry the corpse thither.

This done, an end of the clothes-line was tied about the transom beam in such a way that the body hung by the neck in the door-way, its hideous and distorted features looking directly within the room.

Stepping from the chair, Goucher turned it over on its side, so that it might appear that the suicide had kicked it from beneath him in consummating his act of self-destruction.

Then flashing the lantern's rays in a general survey upon the floor, strewn with old clothes and the tools which he had determined to leave behind, and upon Sammy Muggins' sleeping form, he elbowed his way between the dangling body and the door-frame, and ascended the stair-way, followed by his underlings.

In the hall-way above the burglars removed their masks, and blew out the light in the dark lantern.

It was now three in the morning, and the rain fell in torrents upon the street.

There are roundabout routes known to thieves in which, upon such a night in New York, no officer will be met or seen.

One of these routes the four men took from the house, when they had convinced themselves that no "peeler" lurked in the street without.

An hour later they were overhauling the pile of "boodle" heaped before them on the table in the sawdust den.

CHAPTER LIV.

SAMMY MUGGINS AWAKES.

It was broad daylight when Sammy Muggins awoke. When he did so it was with a grunt or groan of sorrow that day had summoned him from rest.

For years he had been little more than Moses' slave, earning a bare living in dancing attendance upon his more fortunate brother's whims from early dawn until he was permitted to retire for the night.

It was little wonder that he relished slumber, for that had been about his only comfort.

Like his niece, Rachel, he had despised the miserly methods of his rich brother, and, like her, though forced to abet Moses' "crooked" work, his heart was not in it. True, he had hope of future riches, as all of his race have, but his ideas ran toward gaining the coveted treasure by "shtock" sales.

It had been Moses' custom to call Sammy at daylight, when he arose, and set him to work at making the fires, and other chores.

On this morning, when Sammy awoke, he did not for a time open his eyes, but feeling that he had slept long and well, lay momentarily expecting to hear Moses' call.

At length, believing that he had wrongly estimated the hour, he opened his eyes, hoping to assure himself that it was still night.

Perceiving that it was broad day, he started up on his cot in astonishment.

As he did so he beheld Moses' body dangling in the doorway.

A shiver of terror ran through his nerves, and bracing his trembling limbs upon the bed, he remained for a minute speechless, and glaring wildly at the horrible apparition.

Then, as if he thought himself asleep and dreaming a terrible dream, he averted his face and rubbed his hands roughly over his temples and eyes to convince himself that he was awake.

But when he looked again the corpse still met his gaze, its eyes glaring vacantly forth as if they would burst from their sockets, the mouth wide open, the tongue swollen and extended—the entire aspect hideous in the extreme.

With a cry of horror, Sammy sprang from the bed.

Wringing his hands in agony, he advanced several steps toward the body.

A moment he stood glaring at it in mute terror. Then dropping upon his knees, and bending forward, he beat his forehead upon the floor, in the deep woe of his soul, and cried, aloud :

“Oh, Heaven, my brother Moses ! my brother Moses !”

Then, springing to his feet, he ran to and fro in the room, repeating the cry, and weeping like a child.

As he did so his foot tripped upon the exhaust pump left by the burglars, and he pitched headlong upon the floor.

As he arose to his knees the frenzied man for the first time perceived the burglars’ tools scattered amid the piles of clothing on the floor, and the gaping and despoiled safe.

“Murder ! tiefs ! robbers ! burglars !” he shrieked, bounding to his feet.

“Poor, poor brother Moses !” he cried, as his eyes again fell upon his brother’s form.

“I see it all, Moses—you vas murdered !—murdered, brother Moses murdered !”

Approaching the body he caught the cold hand of the dead man in his, and covered it with kisses.

Then he yelled wildly for Rachel, and receiving no answer, hastened above in his night raiment to arouse her. Reaching the door of her room he rapped loudly thereon, crying out as he did so :

“Rachel ! Rachel ! Come quick, Rachel ! Moses vas murdered ! Your fadder vas murdered !”

Repeating his summons louder and louder, a dozen times without response, the fear that Rachel also might be dead possessed his brain.

Clutching his hair wildly with his hands, he ran to and fro the length of the hall-way, weeping and yelling like a maniac.

Suddenly he darted toward the door, grasped and turned the door knob.

The door swung open, and he beheld Rachel bound upon the bed.

"Oh, Rachel! Rachel! Moses! Rachel!" cried the terrified man as he advanced to the bedside.

Rachel had striven bravely to free herself from her bonds during the long hours of the night.

By dint of great effort she had succeeded in freeing her right hand.

Despite her patient endeavors, she could accomplish no more, and at length utterly exhausted, remained quietly awaiting the relief which she felt morning would bring.

When she beheld Sammy approaching she pointed with her right hand, as well as she could, toward the gag in her mouth, and mumbled through her nose in her endeavor to bid him take it off.

Sammy's brain was so nearly crazed that, for a time, he either could not or would not understand her, but continued to weep and yell forth his lamentations.

Rachel continued her gestures, and repeated her mumbled command so vigorously that at length the noises forced from her nostrils sounded as if she were in imminent danger of strangling.

This seemed to bring Sammy to his senses, and he began to fumble about the gag.

His efforts were not guided by any intelligence, however, and for a time the knot that held the gag appeared in less danger of being undone than Rachel's eyes did of being prodded out by Sammy's trembling and clumsy fingers.

All the while he kept up his lamentations for his dead brother.

And all the while his tears fell like rain upon Rachel's face.

Rachel's visage became as red as fire, and her eyes flashed wickedly upon the heart-broken man at such moments as she dared open them.

At length Sammy managed not to untie the knot at the back of Rachel's neck, but to force the gag out of her mouth over her chin.

The operation almost wrenched the unfortunate young woman's jaw from its sockets, and caused her intense pain.

So soon as she found her tongue free she only waited to draw a long breath, and then burst forth, angrily:

"You wrinkled up, vizard-faced, old Jew, you!" she ex-

claimed. "Oh, if I vas a man, you miserable, old rat, you! I'd fire you out by de street so quick I get my hands on you! Bah, vid you—you—you—"

And, indelicate though it may seem to recount it, Rachel spat directly in Sammy's face.

Had he set off an unsuspected bomb-shell beneath his feet poor Sammy could not have been more astonished than he was at the result of freeing Rachel's tongue.

His cries suddenly ceased, and his tears dried in the corners of his staring eyes.

"Vy, Rachel," he said, meekly, "I come to tell you dot poor Moses—your fadder, Rachel—vas hung up down de stairs by de tiefs!"

"I wouldn't care he vas fired out from a cannon!" cried Rachel.

"Vy, Rachel, vot you say?" muttered Sammy, the breath almost departing from his body in his astonishment.

"I say," shrieked Rachel, "you could see I vas tied down by dis bed. And I vant you to go by dat cupboard, take de butcher-knife, and cut me quick loose, or I would cut your throat vid it."

Sammy shambled mechanically toward the cupboard, and secured the knife.

"Now mind your eye you don't cut nothing but de ropes," instructed Rachel, in a milder tone. "Put de knife inside, and pull it out against de rope toward you."

Sammy began to use the knife carefully, as Rachel directed.

Rachel's sudden outburst of indignation had been as unusual in its way as the more dreadful surprise that had greeted the distracted brother of Moses below.

To a degree it had served to swing back his senses to a proper equilibrium.

At all events, Sammy made no mistake in the use of the knife.

A half dozen cautious severings of the rope, and Rachel's limbs were freed.

Swinging herself from the bed, she assumed a sitting posture upon its edge.

"Oh, Rachel! Rachel!" began Sammy, as the great grief again pressed upon his brain, and his tears burst forth afresh, "did you know it—could you believe it? Your poor old fadder, Moses, vas dead."

"Yes, and I vas near dead, too," moaned Rachel, rubbing her hands together and pressing her limbs. "I vas dead asleep all over."

Rachel continued to rub her benumbed limbs, and at length began to cry bitterly in her misery.

Sammy dropped back upon a chair, and covering his face with his hands, swayed to and fro, weeping and uttering lamentations coupled with his brother's name.

Presently Rachel tottered toward the stove, in which the fire had long since gone out.

Lifting the coffee pot from it, she placed the spout thereof to her lips and drank deeply of the cold, invigorating liquid within.

Replacing the utensil, she turned toward Sammy and said:

"Vat is dat you say of my fadder, Uncle Sammy?—he vas tied down?"

"No, I said not he vas tied down, Rachel," moaned Sammy. "He vas hung up! Poor Moses vas dead—dead!"

"I would not believe such nonsense. You vas crazy, Uncle Sammy," quoth Rachel.

As she spoke she limped from the room and hastened along the hall-way to the stair way at its rear.

Sammy staggered to his feet and followed her, moaning piteously.

Ere he had reached the hall-way Rachel had begun to descend the stair-way.

Suddenly a shrill, heart-rending shriek rang throughout the building.

Rachel had beheld the form of her father dangling dead in the door-way, and, plunging forward in a swoon, had fallen in a mass at the bottom of the stair-way.

Thoroughly alarmed by the terrible cry, and rendered delirious at the remembrance of the horrible spectacle beneath, Sammy Muggins began to run swiftly back and forth in the hall-way, and yell at the top of his voice.

A number of the neighbors and passers-by soon congregated at the door without.

A policeman, attracted by the crowd, elbowed his way to the door, and opened it.

"What is the matter there?" he demanded, gruffly, of Sammy, as he peered within the hall-way, and beheld the frenzied man flying about in his night-clothes and yelling like a madman.

Sammy continued his cries, and pointed down the stair-way.

The officer entered and hastened in the direction indicated.

A moment later he emerged with pallid features among

the excited crowd, and rang his club loudly upon the stone door-step for assistance.

A second officer soon came running to the scene of the trouble.

"Hurry up and report to the sergeant at the desk," whispered the first officer, excitedly, in his comrade's ear, "that there's foul work been goin' on in this house last night. A burglary has been committed, and there's a man stark dead below."

The officer, as bidden, hastened away, while the first policeman kept guard on the door, driving back the growing crowd, who whispered all sorts of stories into each other's ears, and hearkened eagerly to the cries of the demented man within the hall-way.

Soon after a squad of officers, headed by the captain of the precinct and accompanied by the ward detective, arrived.

Perceiving that Moses Muggins was dead they permitted his body to remain as it was, to be viewed by the coroner.

The swooning daughter of the dead man was tenderly borne to her bed.

Sammy Muggins was forced to don his clothes with the assistance of the officers.

For a time, in spite of their efforts to calm him, he continued to cry forth at the highest pitch his voice could command.

At length he sank back, completely worn out, and unable to utter more than a low, dismal moan.

Meanwhile a physician had been sent for, and the captain and his assistants busied themselves overhauling the scene of the crime, and framing their ideas as to the method of the burglary, and their theories as to the identity of the burglars who had committed it.

CHAPTER LV.

BRIDGER'S MURDER PLANNED.

On the morning subsequent to the discovery of the burglary by the police, Ted, the bartender, "Tom, the Frog," and Goucher entered the "sawdust den" at daylight.

After stirring up the drooping fire they dropped into chairs at the table.

A few minutes later "Jack, the Fork," entered, and tossed four of the morning papers thereon.

Goucher selected the paper he wished, "Tom, the Frog," made a second selection, and Ted, the bartender, and "Jack, the Fork," each grasped one of the remaining journals.

For a time they shifted the papers about impatiently, but at length, finding what they had looked for, spread them on the table, and, bending over them, became deeply absorbed in the perusal.

The articles that claimed their attention, as may be readily surmised, related to the Muggins' burglary.

Each of the papers contained a detailed statement of the affair, and when Goucher had ended reading the version given in the paper he held he passed it toward "Tom, the Frog," and, without further ceremony, took "Tom, the Frog's" paper and began to peruse the account given in it.

Thus the "King of the Ken" passed abruptly from one paper to the other, until he had read the statement given in each.

Meanwhile strict silence had reigned, and not a word had been spoken.

When Goucher had finished reading the version of the fourth paper he suddenly sprang from his chair, shoved his hands into his trousers pockets, and began to pace to and fro excitedly.

The three men quietly read on and paid no attention to him.

They knew that when he had revolved the cause of worry in his mind, and settled on his plan of dealing with the trouble, he would let them know of it.

Several minutes later Goucher abruptly paused in his walk, and, stamping his foot upon the floor, roared out:

"Curse him! curse him! curse him!"

"Who? Old Sammy?" said "Tom, the Frog."

"No, not old Sammy," snapped Goucher, gruffly.

"Well, so far as I see," commented "Tom, the Frog," "everything looks right, and no cause appears for getting the dyspepsia over the thing. Sammy and Rachel have testified that two tall men, representing themselves as detectives, had entered the house some nights previous to the burglary, and had killed the dog. They don't say what the men's business was, and consequently they're looking for the "trippers" that took you to the country, thinking them the thieves."

"And suppose they'd find them 'trippers,' what then?" demanded Goucher.

"They'd languish in the 'cooler' and take their trial."

"They would, eh? They would not, then. But in twenty-four hours after they found them we'd be in the 'cooler' ourselves."

"How do you make that out?"

"I make it out that Bridger was sittin' in the same cab a-listenin' when the 'gam' told me of the signal, the dog's death, and the 'boodle' in the Muggins' safe; and, if they hunt Bridger up, he'll drop to it in a twink that we are the 'jiggers' that did the job."

"Well, why didn't you think of that before?" ventured "Jack, the Fork."

"Why didn't you and Ted think of tyin' Muggins a little more sensible? Don't you notice that the coroner's dropped to the fact that the old 'bloke' was tied down before he was hung up? I tell you them welts your rope left on him gives things a bad look, and go to prove to all creation, from babies up, that the Jew was murdered."

"That's got nothing to do with Bridger," quoth "Jack, the Fork."

"No, perhaps not. But it goes to show that the one thing was a slip of the memory on my part, and the other was a slip of judgment on yours. And betwixt the two slips matters looks risky for us, I warn you all."

"Bah!" ejaculated "Tom, the Frog." "I don't weaken for a cent. Suspectin' and provin' are two different things. Let's wait till we hear that we're suspected before we 'beef.' "

"Make no mistake, I'm neither weakenin' nor beefin, Tom, my boy," said Goucher. "But my clothes would fit me better if Bridger had managed to've dropped through the trap instead of you, when we tried to put him there."

"Well, what are you goin' to do about it?"

"What am I goin' to do about it, eh? Why, I'm goin' to put him there. Nor I'll never feel easy till he's put to bed with a shovel ten feet below the sewer."

CHAPTER LVI.

BRIDGER TRAPPED.

At dusk on the evening subsequent to Goucher's avowed determination to murder Bridger the party arrived in New York from Alton, and repaired to the St. Nicholas Hotel.

Thoroughly absorbed with their own affairs, Bridger or

the Scotch detective had not found time to read the papers, and were not informed of the Muggins' burglary.

That night the two detectives visited Bridger's Bond street rooms, and after looking over the mail that awaited them, retired for the night.

The most important letter which Bridger received was one from Washington, informing him that his work on the smuggling case was satisfactory, and ordering him to hold himself ready to proceed at once to Kentucky to look after some persistent moonshiners, who were there doing a wholesale business in illicit whisky.

Early on the following morning the two sleuth-hounds returned to the hotel for breakfast.

At breakfast Dr. Macy informed them that he had received one thousand dollars, which had been forwarded to the hotel from the Bower Detective Agency.

After breakfast Bridger set forth alone to visit Detective Bower, and notify him that Dr. Macy had received the amount forwarded.

The Scotch detective would not quit the company of his fair fiancée at the time, but made an appointment to meet Bridger at the hotel at one P. M. on business.

Bridger had barely progressed two blocks on Broadway when he heard a voice close at his ear call out:

"Ho, there, Bridger! Bridger, I say!"

And turning about Bridger found himself confronted by Goucher.

"I just happened to be in the saloon on the corner," said the "King of the Ken," extending his hand, "and seein' you pass by I thought I'd ask you how the murder case turned out at Alton, and apologize for leaving that town so suddenly. The fact is, I was afraid that I might be arrested if I stopped longer."

"As matters turned," quoth Bridger, "your leaving made no difference whatever. The Englishman drugged his accomplice to death that same night, and afterward cut his own throat, thus ending the case."

"The duse you say! But I suppose your promise holds good just the same, and you will not make a move against me for the brush we had in the house?"

"What I promise, I keep," returned Bridger. "I have no interest at present in the local affairs of New York city. But I would advise you not to use that trap any more, and—"

"I never used it before, and never will again," interrupted Goucher.

"And drop 'crooked' work," added Bridger, "or New York detectives will pull you in soon enough on their own hook."

"Truth, every word of it, truth, Bridger, and I take your plan from this hour. I wish to Heaven I could repay your forbearance and kindness in some way. Before God, it would do my soul good if I could do so."

"That is not necessary."

"By the way, Bridger, I'll tell you what I can do for you. I'm going to make a clean breast now. You know in the sawdust 'racket' we send out circulars to people we think might bite all over the country?"

"Yes."

"Well, when we get an answer from a man who owns a store, a hotel, or a farm, we frequently send him some genuine new bills, and ask him to shove them. He finds, of course, that they go all right, and the first thing he does is to mortgage his property, and come on to invest in the queer, thinkin' that his everlastin' fortune is made."

"I understand the racket."

"But you never worked it, and, as I was goin' to say, before these fellows come on, they sometimes become very communicative in their letters. They seem to want to make us understand that they are genuine 'crooks' themselves, and tell us of the various sharpening 'rackets' goin' on in their neighborhood. And I have just been thinkin' now, as I'm givin' over the business, that I've got a package of letters from a fellow in Kentucky, who's engaged in the moonshiner line, that give facts which might interest you as an officer of the government."

Bridger, as we have seen, was at the time expecting to be sent to Kentucky to look into the affairs of a band of 'crooked' whisky men there, and the letters of the supposed moonshiners did interest him.

"What does the fellow say in his letters?" he asked.

"He says that he is the secretary of a gang who have half a dozen distilleries runnin' in the mountains, and that the whisky is loaded at night on a boat in the river, and is shipped as tar, in tar daubed barrels at Cincinnati."

"What is the man's name and address?"

"Let me see—John—John—hang it all, why can't I think of it. But it's only a short walk across town to my place. Step over along, and I'll give the letters and welcome if they might be of service to you."

Goucher's manner seemed sincere, and, being ignorant of

the Muggins' burglary, Bridger could not perceive any motive for deception on his part.

He did not, however, wholly trust the man, but being well armed, and having no fear of Goucher or his gang within or without their den, he complied.

On reaching the "den" Goucher entered at the side door, and Bridger followed.

"My papers are in my office at the rear of the bar-room," said the "King of the Ken," as he led on toward the rear end of the dark hall-way.

When he had advanced to within a few feet of a door which opened to the right at the end of the hall-way he suddenly paused, and permitted Bridger to approach his side.

"Now, Bridger," he said, "you can go in with me, or wait here until I get the package, as you please."

At that moment Bridger heard a slight creak in the floor at his rear, and became convinced that a man in his stocking feet was creeping up stealthily behind him.

He attempted to pull forth his revolver, but before he could even glance about he received a heavy blow on the left side of the head.

On the instant Goucher threw his full weight forward, and pushed the detective violently backward.

As his body came in contact with the board partition at his rear the boards parted inward, and Bridger plunged helplessly backward into the dark depths of the trap he had once before so narrowly escaped.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE RED SLEUTH-HOUND ON THE WALL.

Bridger plunged a distance of fifteen feet into the dark depths of the trap, and struck the moist, loose earth at its bottom squarely upon his back.

He was stunned, but not rendered insensible, by the fall.

The wound on the side of his head stung him a little, but otherwise the position in which his body fell seemed so comfortable that nature's impulse bade him lay still for a time and recover his faculties.

Pulling forth his pistols, the sleuth-hound remained idly lying as he had fallen, awaiting developments, and ready and eager to "cut loose on anything that might show itself."

While his body was yet in the air the panel door of the trap had been sprung shut, and all about him was impenetrable blackness.

Not a ray of light from any source penetrated the thick darkness that surrounded him.

The air was chilly, foul, and damp.

An odor of decaying blood, such as one meets in the vicinity of a slaughter-house, assailed his nostrils.

The squeaking of numberless rats sounded in his ears from the dark recesses about.

The plashing and rumbling of sewage in the sewer to the left he plainly heard.

A distant hum of voices, and sound of clicking glasses, came from the bar-room above.

There was no use to shout for aid, for that would only bring the "gang" upon him before he was prepared to offer them proper resistance.

He dared not strike a match, for that had disclosed his whereabouts, and a bullet from some interstice in the wall might end all.

Something, however, had to be done, for Bridger had no notion of "saying die until he was dead."

Staggering to his feet, the sleuth-hound began a cautious investigation of his surroundings.

He could only do so by his sense of touch.

He found that he was inclosed in an oblong square five feet wide, some thirty feet long, and bordered on all sides by stone walls.

Half way in either of the long side walls was a narrow door of heavy wood, without lock or keyhole and firmly barred without.

At regular intervals of two feet in the wall, at the rear side, were interstices between the stones.

These holes were some two inches wide, and beginning at a point two feet from the earth, extended upward a distance of three or more feet.

They were sheeted with iron, and appeared to widen as they extended backward.

The noise of the rats, as they ran squeaking about, showed that back of the rear wall was a broad cellar-way.

Doubtless in this cellar-way some of the "gang" then lurked, or would soon approach to dispatch the trapped sleuth-hound.

Bridger determined to get out of the reach of these holes in the wall if possible.

Did he remain on the earth at the trap's bottom that

would be impossible, for they commanded every inch of its space.

He must then endeavor to get above them.

Feeling his way along the rear wall to the corner opposite the panel door through which he had plunged, he tried to climb the wall.

The stones composing it were large and rough, frequently protruding far enough to afford a foothold.

The mortar between them was softened by the damp air, and he found little difficulty in cutting it with his pocket knife.

Availing himself of the projecting stones, and cutting holes in the mortar, the sleuth-hound succeeded, after some hard work, in ascending ten feet from the floor with his boots on.

Finding he could climb the wall above the holes, he hastily descended to the bottom of the trap, and disrobed himself of everything save his night-shirt, drawers, and socks.

Bridger's exertions had caused him to perspire freely.

He completely saturated his handkerchief in wiping his face, neck, and hands in his endeavors to stanch the perspiration.

At length it dawned upon the trapped sleuth-hound that what he had considered perspiration was for the most part blood.

Removing his hat he for the first time placed his hand to the wound on his head.

He found that it was bleeding freely, and that his hair was one mass of clotted blood.

Tying the handkerchief tightly about his head and jaws so as to inclose the wound, he knelt upon the earth and continued his work.

He was fortunately possessed of a bachelor's pin-card, filled with pins.

Pinning his trousers outside of his boot-legs, he filled the trousers and boots full of the loose earth.

Then pinning shut his overshirt at the bottom he filled it with the same commodity.

Tearing the lining from his overcoat he tied in it the pieces of mortar which he had cut from the wall.

The bundle snugly fitted his hat, and he jammed it to place in its crown.

He then placed the several parts of the "dummy" together on the earth, so as to represent a man of his size lying upon his face.

Being only guided in his work by touch, he was careful to make the imitation as perfect as he could.

He buttoned his vest about the stuffed shirt, buttoned his under-coat over that, and his overcoat over all, taking care to stuff the arms of the overcoat with earth, and bend them naturally under, so as not to discover the absence of hands.

The hat with the bundle of mortar in its crown he carefully pinned to place on the overcoat, and bent down its soft border so that it might require a close observation to perceive that there was not a human head beneath it.

When he had satisfied himself that the "dummy" would answer the purpose intended, the sleuth-hound placed his revolvers in the band of his drawers, the "big diamond" and his money wallet in one of his socks, and knife in hand, returned to his work on the wall.

He found it so much easier to climb in his stocking feet that in a very few minutes he had ascended to a height of twenty feet from the earth.

Here he made a number of deep cuts in the soft mortar, forming a perch in the corner where he could rest at ease with his back against the juncture of the two walls, and have his hands free to use his pistols if occasion required.

Again descending to the trap's bottom, he placed the mortar which he had removed beneath the "dummy."

He then smoothed the earthen floor from whence he had taken the earth as best he could.

Then taking his watch from his vest-pocket, he placed it on the earth as far from the "dummy" as the length of the chain would permit.

Having thus shaped his plan to resist the evident intention of the burglars, he awaited their coming, listening at one of the interstices in the wall.

How long he waited in damp and darkness, hearing nothing but the squeaking of the rats, the plashing of the sewer, and the dull hum from the bar-room above, he could not have determined at the time.

Hours and even days seemed to pass, and he became chilled and shivered with the cold.

To warm himself he began to trot to and fro along the wall.

At length he became desperately hungry.

He took a cigar from the dummy's pocket, and, biting a piece from it, began to chew it.

"What," he thought, "if it should be Goucher's purpose to starve me here."

If this was the intention of the "King of the Ken," as it might be, he must endeavor to break his way through the wall.

With this intent he had begun his search for an available point of operation, when he suddenly heard the creaking of an opening door.

Hastening into one of the interstices in the wall he perceived far back to the leeward in the cellar without, a faint glimmer of light.

He knew that it came from a dark lantern cautiously held.

Suddenly the rays of the dark lantern flashed broadly across the cellar, and then all was dark again.

That the burglars were coming to finish their murderous work Bridger felt assured.

Hastening along the wall to the corner the caged sleuth-hound climbed to his perch above, and taking good footholds in the lodgements he had formed, braced himself back against the wall, cocked his revolvers, and held them ready for business.

Suddenly a broad glare of light penetrated the interstices beneath, and on the instant a cotton ball, saturated with spirits of turpentine and blazing brightly, was hurled through a square hole in the rear wall, of whose existence Bridger was ignorant.

The fire-ball fell several feet from the "dummy," and lighted up the space between the rough walls of the trap as bright as day.

Bridger glanced at the "dummy," and perceived that it had the exact resemblance of a man lying upon his face.

A moment afterward a long pole, like a dust-brush handle, was thrust through one of the interstices beneath, and directly above the supposed man.

On the upper end of the pole was fastened a bar of lead, and beneath it was attached an ugly knife.

Its blade ran in curves, and its point was like that of a bayonet.

An instant it glistened in the light, and then swiftly descended with a dull thud upon the back of the "dummy."

Had the supposed man possessed a heart the dagger would have cleft it, for it had been aimed with that intent.

Thrice the terrible weapon was raised and sent home in quick succession, making as many punctures in Bridger's overcoat.

Then the murderous implement was withdrawn, and the

next moment the noise of loosing bolts and bars sounded from beneath.

The narrow door in the rear wall opened, and Goucher, followed by "Jack, the Fork," entered the trap's bottom.

"He's as dead as a herrin'," said Goucher, "and when we get him safe abed with the shovel, I'll be feelin' safer."

As the two burglars advanced toward the "dummy," it was only a question in Bridger's mind which he would kill first.

The sleuth-hound was by no means a blood-thirsty man, but the heart of the mountain catamount never leaped higher in glad expectation as he made ready to spring from the high bough upon the unsuspecting prey, than did Bridger's as he leveled the tubes of his good pistols on that pair of scoundrels.

He knew that his bullets would go just where he wanted them to go, and the chances were terribly in favor of the two men receiving their death summons then and there.

As Goucher spoke, "Jack, the Fork's" eye perceived the watch lying near the "dummy," and he sprang forward to grasp it.

This move elected Goucher the nearest man to the narrow door, and Bridger drew a "dead bead" on him.

Just as the sleuth-hound laid his finger on the trigger, and was on the point of sending the ball through the burglar's brain, the sound of hurrying footsteps came from overhead.

On the instant a voice, which sounded from beneath in the trap, said:

"Lay low, for Heaven's sake! It's a pull!"

Goucher and "Jack, the Fork," started back, trembling in terror, and then advanced hastily toward the farther end of the trap.

"Great Heaven!" muttered Goucher, "can it be they've dropped on us?"

"Jack, the Fork," was too much alarmed to make answer, and the two thieves stood glaring at a speaking-tube which Bridger perceived ran down the wall from above, and through which the warning had been spoken.

"You can bet your life, Goucher, you're dropped on!" said Bridger, for the two men were now a safe distance from the door, and the sleuth-hound had determined if possible to hold them at bay until he had learned the outcome of the announced "pull."

Turning about, in a dazed manner, the two burglars beheld Bridger perched above them, in the corner of the wall.

To the sleuth-hound's utter astonishment Goucher's face suddenly assumed a ghastly pallor, his legs knocked together in terror, and sinking to his knees on the earthen floor, he lifted his hands above his head as if in prayer.

"Jack, the Fork," speechless and trembling, perceiving his chief's attitude, followed his example.

Their sudden terror may be better understood when it is explained that Bridger's underclothing was of bright red flannel, and his face, neck, hands, and hair were completely covered and stained red with blood.

The bloody handkerchief, tied about his head, seemed like two great red ears, and, in the glow of the fire-ball, he much resembled the stage devil, who springs suddenly to view through the wall in the theater.

Perceiving that the trembling burglars evidently believed that he was either the avenging spirit of the dead sleuth-hound or Old Nick himself, Bridger said in the deepest tones he could command :

"Now, keep to your knees, for the man who first attempts to rise goes first to Hades !"

CHAPETR LVIII.

THE SCOTCH DETECTIVE TO THE RESCUE.

The mystified burglars remained mutely upon their knees, their hands clasped and trembling, and their eyes glaring wildly at the blood-red apparition above them.

Meanwhile Bridger kept them covered with his revolvers, listened intently to the growing noise above and watched the fire-ball which still continued to blaze brightly.

So long as it held out to burn the kneeling villains were safe.

Did it give signs of burning out two sharp reports had rung out between the damp walls of the trap, and their lives had gone out with it.

Lower and weaker burned the blaze, but ere it had so far drooped as to make Bridger an executioner, the harsh blows of an ax sounded on the floor directly above.

A rain of splinters came flying down, and the next moment the huge trap-door of the "sawdust den" fell back on its hinges, and, glancing upward, Bridger perceived a line of blue-coated policemen peering downward, while among them, ax in hand, stood the Scotch detective.

The Scotch detective, true to his appointment, had entered the office of the hotel at the hour of one.

He was surprised to find Bridger absent, for he had always found him as prompt as the clock before.

As the afternoon wasted on by two, and then by three o'clock, and Bridger came not, the Scotch detective became alarmed.

Hastening to the Bower Detective Agency, he was the more dumfounded at learning that Bridger had not been there.

But when Detective Bower informed him of the Muggins' burglary he suspected Bridger's whereabouts at once.

Hastening to police headquarters on Mulberry street, he stated his fears to the superintendent, and that officer at once dispatched in his company a trio of detectives and a squad of policemen to "pull" the Goucher den.

As the officers entered the den, Ted, the bartender, dropped behind the bar, and warned Goucher and "Jack, the Fork," through the tube.

The next moment the bartender and "Tom, the Frog," were made prisoners, and the search of the house began.

The Scotch detective procured an ax, and led directly to the "sawdust den."

The door was burst open, and then the ax was used upon the trap-door.

A few well-directed blows, and it fell, as we have seen.

"Too late! alas, we're too late!" exclaimed the Scotch detective, as his eyes fell upon the life-like "dummy" prone on the trap's bottom.

"By no means, Fandon; you're just on time," called back Bridger, brandishing his pistols, in his perch in the corner, to attract the attention of those above.

The Scotch detective and the line of officers glared at the red sleuth-hound on the wall in astonishment.

They could hardly believe the evidence their eyes presented.

"Make no mistake," said Bridger, perceiving their surprise, and striking his breast with one of his pistols. "This red thing here on the wall is Bob Bridger, and that dead man stretched out below is a stuffed dummy!"

Realizing the situation, the officers burst forth in a hearty cheer.

Goucher and "Jack, the Fork," also bounded to their feet.

"Steady there, Goucher. Steady, 'Jack, the Fork,'" warned Bridger, leveling his pistols upon the two men.

"Ay, stop where you are, or we'll riddle you!" cried the police sergeant, and a dozen ugly pistol tubes pointed down from the trap's edge.

"I cave!" ejaculated Goucher, throwing up his hands.

"Jack, the Fork," followed his example.

"You are wise," returned the sergeant. "And now tell us how to get down there."

"Through the flat cellar door in the back yard."

The instruction, however, was not needed, for the Scotch detective, leading the Central Office detectives, had already found the way.

And barely had Goucher spoken when the Scotch detective, lantern in hand, bounded through the narrow doorway into the trap beneath, followed by his companions.

The next moment Goucher and "Jack, the Fork," heard the old familiar click of steel as the Central Office detectives snapped the "ruffles" on their wrists.

"Come down, Bobe, and let us be sure it's you!" yelled the Scotch detective, and, as if his mind had some misgivings on the subject, he turned the "duumy" over with his foot.

Perceiving that it was in truth a "dummy," he roared in laughter.

Descending the wall as swiftly as his stiffened members would permit, Bridger soon reached the earthen floor.

The Scotch detective awaited him with open arms, and the two sleuth-hounds testified to their mutual satisfaction at the turn of events by giving each other a manly hug.

"I'd never thought it you, Bobe, if you hadn't said so. You're red as blood from head to foot. Are you hurt?" said the Scotch detective.

"A slight cut on the head, which a little soap and water will fix all right."

"And how did they get you here?"

"Well, I chanced to meet Goucher on my way to the Bower Agency, and, feeling very grateful for past favors, he desired to present me some letters which he had received from the secretary of a gang of Kentucky moonshiners; and, like a good gudgeon, I swallowed the miserable old devil's bait."

"You needn't call me a devil," growled Goucher, "for if the old fireman himself sports any worse make-up than you do, I want no 'truck' with him. Pew-rents would take a raise if you could be induced to exhibit yourself in a cage."

Removing the pins and earth from the "dummy," Bridger proceeded to don his ill-used clothes.

This done, the Central Office detectives led forth their prisoners, the Scotch detective and Bridger following.

The two sleuth-hounds entered the bar-room above, and, when Bridger had washed the blood from his head, face, and hands, they joined in the search.

Beneath the floor in the bedroom adjoining the "sawdust den" a trunk containing the "boodle" taken from the Muggins' safe was found, and the four burglars were taken, with it, to police headquarters.

CHAPTER LIX.

MR. AND MRS. M'GINTY.

Had the bartender's "billy" struck as he had aimed it there can be little doubt that the ill-treatment which the innocent "dummy" bore would have ended the official career of Bob Bridger, detective.

The quick movement Bridger had made as the blow fell brought him through with a severe scalp wound, but a whole skull.

So said the doctor who dressed the wound, after the "pull" was complete.

On quitting the physician's office the two sleuth-hounds repaired to the Bond street apartments, and when Bridger had made a complete change of attire, they rejoined the party at the hotel and had dinner.

That evening the Scotch detective informed Annette of the widow's proposed wedding.

As he had supposed, the conversation swung naturally around toward their own affair, and ended in a definite understanding, to which Dr. Macy was a party, that they should become man and wife at the same time and place.

Fearing that the investigations of the police might discover the identity of the crazy giant, the Scotch detective explained the situation to Meg, and it was determined that she and "Silly" Billy should depart for Garson on the express train leaving Jersey City at seven on the subsequent evening.

After breakfast next morning Meg instructed Billy to have himself cleanly shaved, while she prepared herself for the shopping tour she had projected.

"Silly" Billy visited the barber and a candy store, and returned to the hotel looking bright and clean, and munching the sweetmeats with which he had gorged his pockets.

Soon after he and Meg departed from the hotel.

Upon every babe in the street, and every little girl and boy he encountered in the stores, Billy bestowed a handful of candy.

This quaint expression of liberality, combined with his silly, gentle manners and remarks, made much fun for mothers and nurses, and the bright eyes of many a grand dame and pretty maid beamed kindly upon him.

Under Meg's influence the crazy giant had become as gentle as a child, while in strength he far excelled any of the busy, scheming throng of men that swarmed about.

Contrasted with his mental, money-getting superiors, he possessed qualities which the eyes of beauty were as quick to discern and approve as flies are to gather on a grain of sugar amid a ton of salt.

But this did not altogether suit Meg.

So, to give Billy other occupation than trading "sweets for sweets," she ignored the privilege of having her purchases delivered at the hotel, and piled Billy's arms full of bundles.

At two in the afternoon, as they were walking in a cross street, Billy suddenly stopped to get a better grip on the armful of packages, and at the same time intimated to Meg that he desired to eat.

"Yez does be always wantin' to ate, ye overgrown vagabond," quoth Meg. "But, however, I've made all the purchases I can call to my moind at the prisint, and we'll be off to the hotel."

As she spoke she happened to glance at the building opposite, and perceiving that it was a church, and that people were passing out and in at its doors, she grasped Billy's coat-tail, restraining the mad gait at which he had set out for the proposed lunch, and bringing him to a right about halt.

"There's one thing," said Meg, "which, among all the foinery of the stores, I did be almost forgettin', Billy."

"Hand what do hit be, Misses Meg?"

"I've made up me moind to marry you, Billy."

"Well, hanythink has'll suit you, Misses Meg, 'll suit me," simpered Billy, as, by a cleverly executed maneuver he managed to hold on to the bundles, and pass a handful of candy into the broad, grinning cavity which answered as a mouth.

"Well, come on," said Meg, and she led directly across to the church.

Ascending the church steps, Meg passed within, followed by Billy and the bundles.

A committee, arranging the details of a coming church fair, occupied the building at the time, and two reverend fathers stood behind the railing at the sanctuary.

Up the aisle Meg progressed in a business like manner, and pausing directly before the more portly of the two fathers, said:

"Your riverence, I have just drapped in to pay you twinty dollars for the celebration of our union."

As she spoke she blushed deeply, and directed her glance toward Billy.

He had paused at her elbow, and dropping the bundles on the floor, leaned forward upon the railing, extending a handful of candy toward the clergyman.

He had also failed to remove his hat, and the two fathers glared at him in astonishment.

Snatching the hat from his head, and giving his coat tails a jerk that brought him to an erect position, Meg shrieked in his ear:

"Do ye think yer at a bar, ye unmannerly vagabond, ye."

The eyes of the committee and of the fathers had rested meanwhile upon the bundles, and as their ideas ran toward contributions to the fair the portly father, in response to Meg's proposal, said:

"I am glad to see, my child, that you take so much interest in the fair."

"Yer riverence," returned Meg, indignantly, "it ill becomes one of yer cloth to joke wid a poor woman. Ye know very well, by the cut av the jib av 'um that he's not fair, but he's good, and that's whoy I take interest in 'um."

"I was speaking of the church fair that we are about to have," said the father.

"And Oy was spakin' av the husband that Oi'm about to have, wid your consint, for twinty dollars."

"Oh, I see!" ejaculated the priest, eying Billy, who had begun to dance. "And do you really wish to marry him?"

"Av coorse I do. Whoy not?"

"And does he wish to marry you?"

"Av coorse. Don't you, Billy?"

"Hanythink has'll suit Misses Meg'll suit Billy."

"But he acts somewhat strangely," observed the priest.

"Whist! yer riverence," quoth Meg, and she leaned forward, and whispered in the father's ear:

"Don't be moindin' the lad. He's a little daft, but, for all that, he's awful knowin' and cunnin', and I loves him."

"He is an Englishman, is he not?" asked the clergyman.

"Oh, it's mesilf don't know phat his nationality is, yer riverence. Oi've sometimes thought he moight be a cross betune a kangaroo and an elephant. But niver do ye moind; it's all right."

"Well, what is his name?"

"Billy's all I knows, yer riverence. But Oi've named him William McGinty, afther my own dear, dead ould father. And, yer riverence, if ye'll bless the name to him, and perform the ceremony, ye shall have the twinty dollars."

Much to Meg's amazement and disappointment, the clergyman would not perform the ceremony until all the rules of the church had been complied with. One of these rules was that the names of the couple should be "called out" in church for two successive Sundays. There could be no exception to these rules, the clergyman said, and they had to submit.

The long wait was irksome to the anxious Meg, but the eventful day came at last, and on it Billy and she were made man and wife.

Meg determined to keep her marriage a secret even from Annette, but the facts leaked out when she had boarded the train in the evening.

The party from the hotel had accompanied the couple to the train, and were sitting and awaiting the signal for its departure at the time in the sleeping-car.

The Scotch detective had assured Meg that she would find no difficulty in taking possession of her late husband's property, and was promising to visit her soon in company with Annette, Mr. Macy, and Bridger, when the conductor of the car came by.

"I wish to pay you for these two sections," said the Scotch detective, indicating the two opposite compartments in which the party sat.

"Whoy?" quoth Meg. "There's no one going but Billy an' mesilf, is there?"

"That's all."

"Thin one sickshont will be all that yez need pay for."

Annette started and glared at Meg in mute astonishment.

"Och, sure, thin, Annette," said Meg, "ye nadn't be puttin' on such a look av outrageous wondermint. Thare it is for ye to rade for yersilf, and Oi'm not ashamed of it nayther."

As she spoke she drew the marriage certificate from her breast and placed it in Annette's hands.

"Why, Mam Meg's married!" exclaimed Annette, and then she burst forth in a merry fit of laughter.

"And phat do you see to laugh at I dunno?" quoth Meg. "But I knew it 'ud be so."

"Why, Mam Meg," returned Annette, "I never dreamed that you would do such a down right mean thing."

"Mean thing, is it? Be the powers, Oi'm not ashamed of it, thin."

"But the idea that you would go off by yourself and get married, and not even ask me to the wedding."

"I would have asked yez all," returned Meg, "but I knew yez would all be laughin' at the match. And you can laugh, me pretty little lady if ye will. But whin ye've been married to a couple av crusty ould scoundrels, one afther the other, loike mesilf, ye'll begin ter foind out for yersilf that ther does be an oshent of truth in the words of the poik whin he says: 'If you would marry, marry a fool.'"

All hastened to assure the bride that she had misjudged them, and promising soon to visit the newly married couple, and wishing them a long life of happiness, the party of friends stepped from the car.

A moment later the train glided from the depot, and thus Mr. and Mrs. McGinty began their honey-moon tour.

CHAPTER LX.

CONCLUSION.

It was not long after the arrest of Goucher and his gang when "Jack, the Fork," turned State's evidence.

A further search beneath the den unearthed three bodies decomposed beyond recognition, and two skeletons.

The evidence was of such a damning nature against the "gang" that, by their attorney's advice, they pleaded guilty to the Muggins' burglary.

The judge accepted their plea, and sentenced the four men to State prison for life.

* * * * *

The bulk of the valuables taken from the Muggins' safe was returned to the heirs of Moses Muggins, Rachel, and Sammy.

The terrible ordeal which Sammy Muggins passed through on discovering his brother's body unsettled his brain, and Rachel became custodian of the entire estate.

A week subsequent to her father's funeral, Rachel wed Carl Ringle, the tailor, and a prosperous clothing store, and a dozen young Ringles, who romp and play with simple-minded old Sammy, are at present the prominent features of the Muggins' mansion on East Broadway.

* * * * *

Dr. Macy provided Annette a magnificent wedding outfit, and both he and the Scotch detective purchased numerous rich presents for Mr. and Mrs. McGinty, and for Mrs. Bibby and Tom Bowling.

Everything being arranged for the event, the wedding party set forth for Corydon, and arrived there on the day appointed for the widow's marriage.

They were cordially received by Tom Bowling and the widow, and that night the double wedding occurred, and was a very happy affair.

Next day the party departed for Garson, and found Mr. and Mrs. McGinty peacefully installed in the Bolard hotel.

The hotel was doing a thriving business, chiefly on account of the landlady's return, and Mr. McGinty, with a wink and a simper, led his sleuth-hound friends to his private barrel.

The funds found in Bolard's safe, together with the hotel property and two rich farms, now formed the estate of Mrs. McGinty, who appeared to be fully aware that she was the wealthiest and best dressed female in the village.

She professed herself happy that Annette had married the man of her heart, but when the time came for parting she broke down completely and wept bitterly.

* * * * *

Soon after the Scotch detective, his beautiful bride, and Dr. Macy sailed for England.

Although the "big diamond" sparkled on Bridger's shirt-front, and the old doctor's draft for two thousand pounds was in his wallet, he felt like one alone and deserted as he beheld the huge steamer glide from sight down the bay.

He almost felt like rushing off and getting married himself.

In fact, if the truth were known, he never did rest content until he met and married the fair Philadelphia maiden who is now his wife.

Although the management of the large Godot estate now

devolved upon the Scotch detective, he remained for several years upon the Scotland Yard detective force, and was ultimately made an inspector of the London police.

This proud position he subsequently resigned, and he is at present part owner and manager of one of the largest lines of steamships sailing from England.

Nine years subsequent to his marriage with Annette, or in the fall of the year 1882, an incident happened in London without recounting which the tale of the Scotch detective would be incomplete.

One afternoon, as Manager Fandon sat in the palatial offices of the steamship company in London, a messenger came to him from a third-rate hotel near the docks.

A sick woman had that day arrived in England upon a steamship, and the doctor said she was dying.

She wished to see Fandon, Annette, their children if they had any, and Dr. Macy.

Who the sick woman was Fandon could not imagine.

What if it should prove to be Annette's mother, Alice, and the marble slab which bore her name, combined with that of her murdered husband, prove a mistake?

Fandon was on the point of driving around himself to solve the mystery, when an open-topped family carriage drove up and halted in the street near his office.

In it sat Annette, still winsome and beautiful, but more matronly in appearance than of yore.

Facing her was Dr. Macy, happier and younger in his own belief, than ever any man of his years had felt before.

Occupying the seat with him were three handsome, black-eyed boys, the picture of their father, while two golden-haired, blue-eyed girls, types of their fair mother, nestled at her side.

When Fandon appeared and spoke of the strange summons he had received, Dr. Macy and Annette became much interested, and, at their earnest desire, Fandon entered the carriage, and instructed the coachman to drive to the hotel indicated.

Soon after Fandon entered the sick-room, followed by Dr. Macy, Annette, and the children.

A thin, emaciated creature lay upon the bed.

Her eyes were closed, and, to all appearances, she was dead.

A physician sat at the bedside, clasping the wrist of the dying woman.

"Poor thing! she's almost gone," said the doctor, "and she seemed so anxious to see you and your family, sir."

"Who is she?" asked Fandon, for he did not recognize the woman's wan features.

"I have not learned her name," said the doctor. "She was brought here from the steamship she came on, and soon after swooned away from sheer weakness. She has revived several times, and asked if you had come; but I fear it is all over with her now."

Dr. Macy looked intently into the woman's face, but he could not recognize her.

Annette bent over the bed and suddenly started back with a scream.

"Great Heaven! it is poor Mam Meg!" she cried.

As she spoke the sufferer's eyes opened.

Annette kissed her thin lips and looked tearfully into her face, waiting to see if she would speak.

"It is you, Annette. I—I thought I knew that voice," gasped the dying woman as the tears coursed down her cheeks.

A moment she paused to catch her breath. Then she continued:

"Oh, I have been so sick! Billy died four years ago. Drink—drink killed him."

Even as the dying woman said, the crazy giant had succumbed to a continual over indulgence of liquor, which had brought on paralysis, from which he died.

He had been so kind and gentle in his obedience to Meg's every whim that her life had become wrapped up in his, and when he died she felt his loss most keenly.

She had always smoked a little, but after Billy's death she became morose, shut herself in her room for days at a time, brooding over her trouble, and smoking her pipe constantly.

At length she became sick and confined to her bed.

The doctor said that too much smoking had formed a cancer in her stomach.

Feeling that she had but a short while to live, she caused her attorney to dispose of her real estate, and departed for England more dead than alive, resolved to see once again the fair face of the little lady she had reared from an out-cast babe.

"Where—where is your—husband?" gasped the dying woman.

Fandon leaned forward beside his wife, so that she might see him.

Meg tried to smile, and her tears coursed down afresh.

"Children?" she muttered.

One by one Fandon lifted his three boys so that she might see them.

Then he lifted to her gaze one of the blue-eyed baby girls on either arm.

Meg looked at them, then slowly pointing to them, and looking toward Annette, said :

“Like you—like you were.”

Then suddenly exerting her little remaining strength as if she had something important to reveal which she had almost forgotten, she grasped Annette’s arm.

“Annette—Annette!” she gasped. “There—there—get it—get it—the little black satchel!”

Among her trunks and bandboxes near was a small, black traveling-bag, and Roe Fandon, Jr., Fandon’s eldest boy, ran and got it.

“There’s a letter—a letter in it for you. Billy wrote it—just—before—he—died,” gasped the dying woman, addressing Fandon. “The—rest—is—yours—Annette.”

Meg’s eyes assumed a vacant stare as she spoke, and she seemed lapsing into unconsciousness.

Her skinny hands trembled violently, and the doctor shook his head.

Fandon and Annette in their solicitude for the dying woman, had almost forgotten the satchel and letter of which she had spoken, when young Roe, who had opened the bag and taken from it the crumpled scrawl, which proved to be “Silly” Billy’s letter, and, reading its entire contents, piped out :

“See-ree go! Master Fandon, see-ree-go!”

The boy’s musical pronunciation sounded much as that of the crazy giant had done when he had felt cheerful and glad of heart, and the dying woman, as she heard it, started up in the bed.

Her eyes beamed with pleasure, a glad smile grew upon her thin features, and, extending her arms as if to infold a dearly loved friend, she ejaculated :

“Oh, Billy!”

And, still smiling, as if in glad recognition of one she loved, she sank back upon the bed, dead.

Fandon wiped the tears from his eyes, and placed Billy’s brief letter in his pocket-book.

Annette carried the little satchel home with her, too much overcome with grief to look at its contents.

That night it was found to contain United States Government bonds to the amount of forty thousand dollars.

The undertaker brought the dead woman’s body to Fan-

don's cozy home, and from there it was buried in his own plot in Kendal Green Cemetery, near the last resting-place of Alfonse and Alice Godot.

Some time afterward Bridger received a letter from Fandon, in which he said :

"I want you to go to Garson for me, have Billy's body exhumed, placed in an iron casket, and forwarded to my address in London. It is Annette's wish. She seems to think that Meg, might she know it, would be glad to have Billy sleeping at her side. And between the two of us, Bridger, when the last trump shall sound, and the dead arise, whose hand would we sooner grasp or whose voice sooner hear than Billy's?"

Bridger did as requested, and the crazy giant's bones now rest side by side with those of his wife Meg, and on the marble block that marks his tomb is inscribed :

"IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM MCGINTY."

"See-ree-go ! Master Fandon ! See-ree-go !"

(THE END.)

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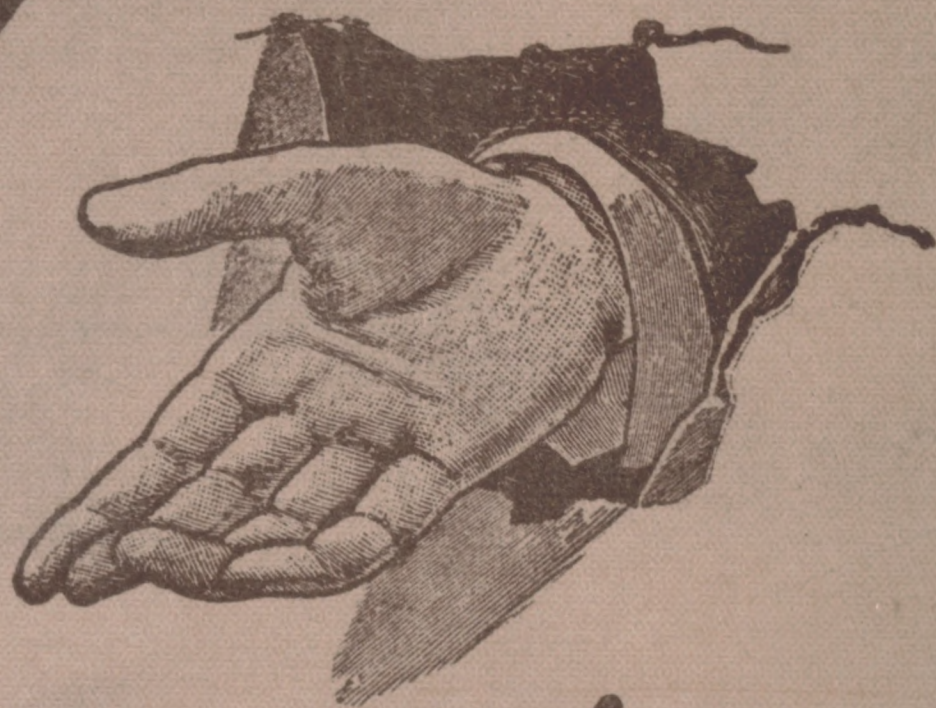
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